

**COLLEGE
FOOTBALL
YEARBOOK
1996**

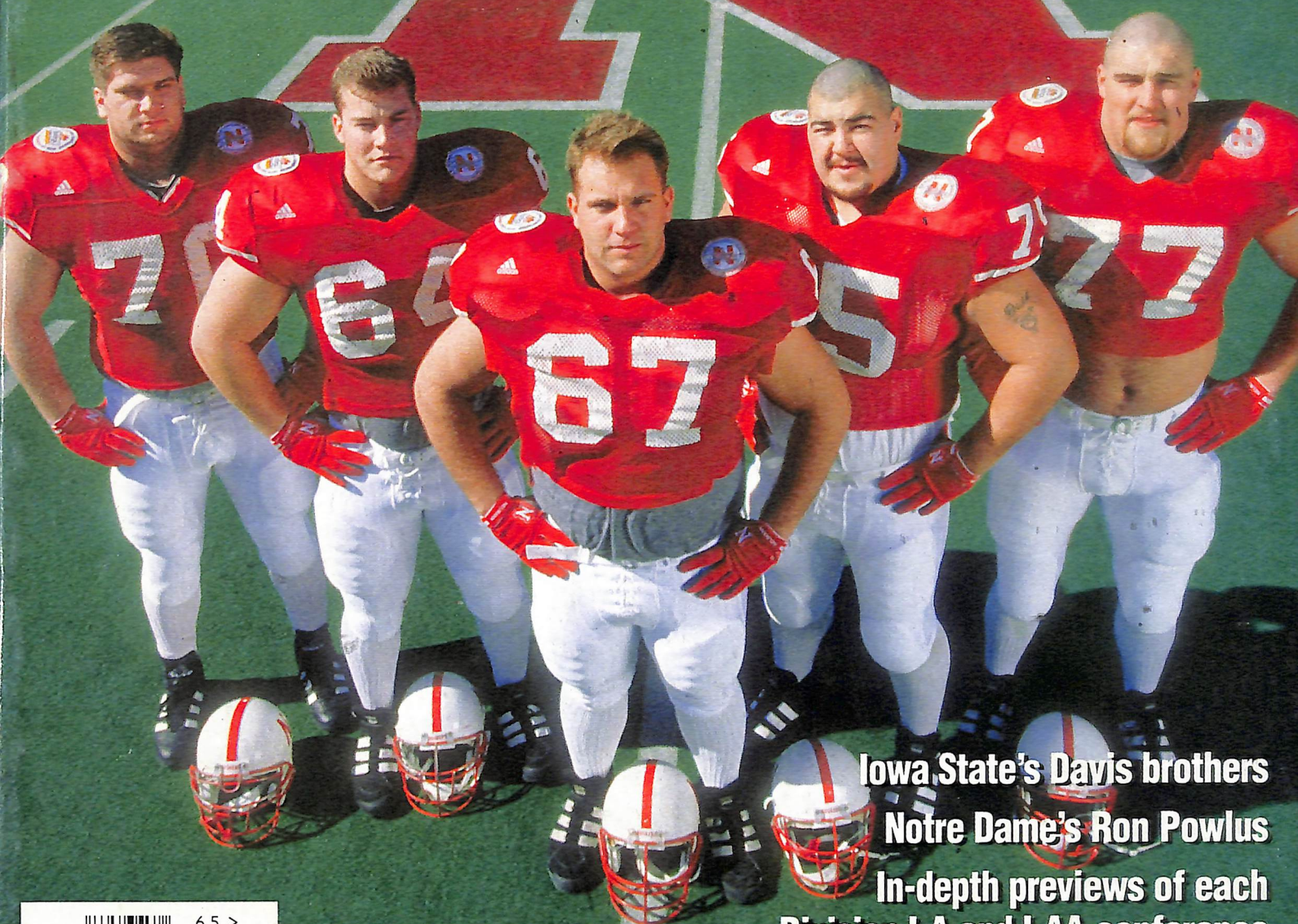
**TOP 25
SNEAK PREVIEW:**

Florida State 1st, Nebraska 2nd,
Colorado 5th, Kansas State 21st

The Sporting News

LINCOLN LOGS

*(From left) Eric Anderson, Jon Zatechka, Aaron Taylor,
Chris Dishman and Adam Treu are the 'Huskers' foundation*



Iowa State's Davis brothers
Notre Dame's Ron Powlus
In-depth previews of each
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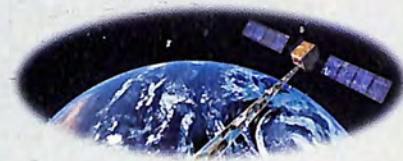
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If a day has gone by since the Fiesta Bowl without some mention of Nebraska football in the paper, on the news wires, in a magazine or on TV, then it somehow escaped my attention. I won't be the least bit surprised if I turn on the TV tonight and see Tommie Frazier mingling with Kramer and Elaine or Dr. Tom Osborne assisting Dr. Mark Greene in the ER at County General.

Unfortunately, it's more likely that I'll see Christian Peter playing himself on *America's Most Wanted*.

It was a tough offseason for the Cornhuskers. After brutalizing Florida to win its second consecutive national championship, the Nebraska football program has been unable to stay out of the news—for all the wrong reasons. Reports of Cornhuskers arrests



TERRY FREI

were becoming as common as sellouts in Lincoln. Two of the biggest stories of the NFL draft involved running back Lawrence Phillips, who probably would have been the No. 1 pick if not for his assault of a former girlfriend last fall, and defensive tackle Christian Peter, who was taken by the Patriots in the fifth round and then dumped because of a rap sheet that made Johnny Rodgers look like a saint. Frazier wasn't drafted at all after doctors discovered a recurrence of blood clots in his leg. And the team suffered genuine tragedy in April when quarterback Brook Berringer, who was flawless in relief while Frazier waged his first battle with blood clots in 1994, died in the crash of the small plane he was piloting.

It was an offseason unlike any other for Nebraska, which had been largely immune to negative press for the first two decades of Osborne's reign in Lincoln. The only thing familiar about it was spring football. The procession of great players through Memorial Stadium continued, with future studs moving into slots vacated by former studs.

And for those who crave stability, there was Nebraska's offensive line. It doesn't really matter whether the team loses or returns all five starters, because Huskers fans know they'll have a front wall that makes life easy for people like Phillips, Derek Brown, Mike Rozier, Roger Craig, Jarvis Redwine, I.M. Hipp and, yes, Johnny Rodgers. The names of the linemen change, and the names probably aren't familiar because few were highly recruited. But, somehow, the Huskers keep cranking out awesome blockers.

We asked Terry Frei to explore how they do it. Terry, a columnist for the *Denver Post*, was intrigued. The son of Jerry Frei, the former coach at Oregon and a longtime NFL assistant, Terry has been in and around football his entire life. There isn't much regarding football that he hasn't done, seen or heard. But when it came to the Huskers' ability to transform unknown Nebraska farm boys into All-American linemen, Terry knew there had to be more to it than Nebraska's world-class weight room.

"I think football has been pretty much 'How much can you bench press?', and these guys have pretty much gotten away from that," Terry says.

What he found was a unique system for developing linemen. That's why you won't see Nebraska linemen running laps or doing aerobics, but you will see them practicing short bursts. Frei explains in "Corn-fed Beef," which begins on page 18.

We have Nebraska No. 2 in our preseason Top 25. Our pick to dethrone the Huskers is Florida State, led by Randy Moss, another high-profile player with a troubled past. Moss, a redshirt freshman, was in jail when this magazine went to press, but he'll be one of the game's most electrifying wide receivers this fall. Gerald Ensley explores Moss' story in "First Turbulence, Then Takeoff" (page 38). Notre Dame quarterback Ron Powlus and Northwestern coach Gary Barnett are among the many other feature subjects that complement our regular assortment of conference previews, predictions, schedules and more on Divisions I-A and I-AA.

After reading this yearbook, you'll be ready for the start of the season. THE SPORTING NEWS will be ready, too, beginning with our College Football Preview issue August 19. You can follow college football every week of the season in THE SPORTING NEWS as well as at our new site on America Online (keyword: The Sporting News). Our service will offer regular updates on each Division I-A team, message boards, chat rooms and Ivan Maisel's previews of each week's big games.

As always, we welcome your comments on any of our products. The reader survey on pages 3 and 4 is one way to tell us how you feel about college football in general and this yearbook in particular. You also can write us at The Sporting News, 10176 Corporate Square Drive, Suite 200, St. Louis, MO 63132, fax us at 314-993-7723, or e-mail us at tsnmail@aol.com.

Keep in touch. We like hearing from people who enjoy college football as much as we do.

Mike Nahrstedt

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COLLEGE FOOTBALL SURVEY



"YO, IT'S FLY. THE BOSS WANTS TO KNOW WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT COLLEGE FOOTBALL AND THIS YEARBOOK. FLY'S TALKIN' ABOUT THE INSIDE SCOOP ON THE SCHOOL BOYS FROM "THE BIBLE OF SPORTS." TELL THE SPORTING NEWS WHAT YOU THINK AND YOU GET A SHOT AT SOME

All you have to do is answer the following questions and return this survey to the address on the next page by October 1, 1996, and you'll be entered in a drawing for a \$100 gift certificate for sports apparel from 1-800-PRO-TEAM – or one of 25 copies of The Sporting News Pro Football guides.

"GET GOIN'. I'LL SEE YOU IN THE SPORTS PAGES."

1. Do you favor a playoff to determine college football's Division I-A national champion? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- 1a. If yes, how many teams should be involved? ☐ 2 ☐ 4 ☐ 8 ☐ 16
2. Would you like to see more bowl games created? ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. Which Top 25 poll do you think is more accurate — the one voted on by the media (Associated Press) or the one voted on by the coaches (CNN/USA Today)? ☐ AP ☐ CNN/USA Today ☐ Neither
4. How should the teams that play in the national title game be selected? ☐ Using one or more of the existing polls ☐ Committee selection
5. Are too many college games televised? ☐ Yes ☐ No
6. Should players who transfer from one Division I-A program to another be required to sit out one year? ☐ Yes ☐ No
7. Should college athletes be paid? ☐ Yes ☐ No
8. Do you believe that the Heisman Trophy is usually awarded to the best college football player in the country? ☐ Yes ☐ No
9. Do you feel the college game has been hurt by too many players going pro early? ☐ Yes ☐ No
10. Ideally, when would you like to purchase The Sporting News College Football Yearbook? ☐ June 15 ☐ June 30 ☐ July 15 ☐ July 31
11. Which conference do you follow most? ☐ ACC ☐ Big East ☐ Big Ten ☐ Big 12 ☐ Pac-10 ☐ SEC ☐ WAC
12. If it came at the expense of our Division I-AA coverage, would you like to see us devote more space to Division I-A conferences? ☐ Yes ☐ No
13. Have you ever watched a sporting event on pay-per-view? ☐ Yes ☐ No
14. How many college football games do you attend in a season? ☐ 0-2 ☐ 3-10 ☐ over 10
15. Is your favorite team in any of the four professional sports outside your local market? ☐ Yes ☐ No
16. If we could devote more or less space to certain sections (without changing the overall number of pages), how would you like to see that space used?

More Fewer Perfect
pages pages as is

- | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|---|
| _____ | _____ | _____ | Feature articles on players, issues, etc. |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | League previews |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | Scouting the nation and conferences |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | Predictions (conference races, All-America teams, etc.) |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | Openers |

17. Would you like to see more coverage of Divisions II and III?
☐ Yes ☐ No

18. Would you like to see more coverage of high school recruiting?
☐ Yes ☐ No

19. Anything else we should change to improve The Sporting News College Football Yearbook?

20. Do you refer to The Sporting News College Football Yearbook throughout the season?
☐ Yes ☐ No

20a. If yes, how often? ☐ weekly
☐ monthly ☐ constantly

21. How many other people read your copy of The Sporting News College Football Yearbook?
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5
☐ 6-10 ☐ 11-15 ☐ more than 15

22. What factors influenced you to buy The Sporting News College Football Yearbook? (Check all that apply.) ☐ overall editorial content
☐ graphic presentation ☐ cover
☐ price ☐ name recognition

23. Which other Yearbooks from The Sporting News do you read or look through? (Check all that apply.)
☐ fantasy baseball ☐ pro football
☐ pro basketball ☐ baseball
☐ college basketball ☐ hockey
☐ fantasy football

24. If it were possible to buy all eight of The Sporting News Yearbooks on a subscription basis, would you do so? ☐ Yes ☐ No

25. Do you read Yearbooks from other companies? ☐ Yes ☐ No

25a. If yes, which ones?

- ☐ Athlon
- ☐ Lindy's
- ☐ College Sports
- ☐ Street & Smith's
- ☐ College Preview
- ☐ College Football Scene
- ☐ Sports Illustrated
- ☐ ESPN
- ☐ Other _____

26. Do you read The Sporting News weekly magazine? ☐ Yes ☐ No

26a. If yes, are you a subscriber?
☐ Yes ☐ No

27. Do you play sports?
☐ Yes ☐ No

27a. If yes, what sports do you play?
☐ football ☐ golf
☐ baseball ☐ tennis
☐ softball ☐ running
☐ basketball ☐ cycling
☐ hockey ☐ hiking/walking
☐ soccer ☐ rollerblading
☐ other (s) _____

28. Have you ever purchased something through the mail?
☐ Yes ☐ No

29. Do you own a personal computer?
☐ Yes ☐ No

30. Do you currently subscribe to an on-line service? ☐ Yes ☐ No

31. Do you play in a Rotisserie or other fantasy league? ☐ Yes ☐ No
☐ baseball ☐ football
☐ basketball ☐ hockey ☐ golf

32. Do you collect trading cards?
☐ Yes ☐ No

32a. If yes, which sports?
☐ baseball ☐ football
☐ basketball ☐ hockey
☐ other _____

32b. Where do you purchase them?
☐ memorabilia store
☐ convenience store ☐ supermarket
☐ mass merchandiser
(K-Mart, Bradlees, etc.)
☐ other _____

33. Do you wear merchandise featuring your teams' logos?
☐ Yes ☐ No

34. How much do you spend a year on sporting goods (clothes and equipment)? ☐ under \$100
☐ \$100 to \$250 ☐ over \$250

35. Will you be buying a new car or truck in the next two years?
☐ Yes ☐ No

36. Have you bought a new car or truck in the last two years?
☐ Yes ☐ No

37. Do you consider brand names in your purchasing decisions?
☐ Yes ☐ No

38. Have you ever traveled to attend a baseball game outside your local market? ☐ Yes ☐ No

39. Please check the category that includes your age. ☐ Under 18
☐ 18-24 ☐ 25-29 ☐ 35-44 ☐ 55-64
☐ 30-34 ☐ 45-54 ☐ Over 64

40. Are you... ☐ male? ☐ female?

41. Are you... ☐ married? ☐ single?

42. Did you attend or graduate from college? ☐ Yes ☐ No

43. Which of the following categories contains your approximate total household income, before taxes, for 1996? (Please include total earnings for all members of your household from all sources.)
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☐ \$30,000-\$39,999 ☐ \$100,000-\$199,999
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TSN ARCHIVES

ERNIE DAVIS

He was a consensus All-American football player. Twice. Better yet, he was the All-American kid. All the time.

Ernie Davis swept across the college football landscape more than three decades ago, moving with uncommon grace on and off the field. Along the way, he blazed a trail, becoming the first black player to win the Heisman Trophy.

In an era virtually devoid of histrionics in sports, when showboating was not only frowned upon but downright uncool, Davis stood above the rest. He was unfailingly modest, polite, kind and happy. And enormously talented, as the halfback's career average of 6.6 yards per carry for Syracuse indicated.

"The smile never leaves Ernie Davis' face," the *Philadelphia Bulletin* reported in December 1961, a week after the Orangemen superstar was presented the Heisman. "He must wear it in his sleep. It's the half-surprised, amused, secret smile of a man aware than something immensely pleasant will

Davis, the first black to win the Heisman, died of leukemia at age 23.

happen to him."

As fate would have it, something very unpleasant would happen to the pride of Elmira, N.Y. The next summer, Davis was diagnosed with leukemia before ever toting the ball for the Cleveland Browns, with whom he was to form a blockbuster 1-2 backfield combination with another former Orange star, Jim Brown. The professional uniting of Syracuse's fabled No. 44s just wasn't to be.

Davis wasn't one to complain, though. Sharing the philosophy of another ill-fated athletic great, Lou Gehrig, he wrote a national magazine story in early 1963 titled "I'm Not Unlucky." In the story, Davis expressed confidence that he would beat his illness and return to football. But within two months of the article's publication, he was dead at age 23.

"He radiated pleasantness and he had the highest ideals," said Ben Schwartzwalder, his coach at Syracuse, at the time of Davis' death. "He just couldn't do enough for people, and he did it all with a smile. Gosh, he even thanked folks asking for his autograph." Years later, Schwartzwalder remembered the key player on his 1959 national-championship team as an "exceptional young man. Anybody who knew Ernie Davis for (even a) very short while loved Ernie Davis." After all, the coach said, he was the "nicest, kindest, most enthusiastic" kid around.

For many in the latest generation of college football fans, Ernie Davis is little more than an answer to a trivia question, the man who broke the Heisman color line 35 years ago and ignited black players' dominance of the college game's preeminent award (21 of the past 31 Heisman recipients have been black). For countless other fans, he was and is far more: a remarkable young man whose indomitable spirit will forever be an inspiration. ♦

DOWN UNDER AND WAY OUT

Riki Ellison may be on to something with this Haka Bowl concept.

The former USC and San Francisco 49ers linebacker has chosen his native New Zealand to host the bowl, which will be more of an event.

You see, if the game is less than scintillating, as seems to be the trend in bowls, there's always the music. Yes, there'll be marching bands, but we're talking about the concerts Ellison has planned for before and after the game. And he's pursuing big-name bands.

"I'm doing this to make a statement and give something back to my country," says Ellison, who was born in Christchurch, New Zealand, and plans on staging other American events in New Zealand. "We want to make this the best bowl outside of the Bowl Alliance."

The bowl, already approved by the NCAA, will take two teams to 50,000-seat Eden Park in Auckland, New Zealand, for \$1.5 million each. The Pacific-10

Conference has a three-year agreement to send its third, then fifth-, then third-place team in alternating years; the other spot will be filled by an at-large team.

The game will be played Thursday, December 26, at 8 p.m. ET on ESPN. While Americans will enjoy the contest in prime time, it'll be 2 p.m. on December 27 in New Zealand. (We think it's pretty safe to assume that almost all of those in the stands will be New Zealanders. After all, that's a looonnnngg—and likely very expensive—trip for most American fans.)

And the name, Haka Bowl? Haka is an ancient Maori war party's dramatic war dance performed in preparation for battle. It has been synonymous with New Zealand rugby for more than a century. ♦

Three-peat? What's that?

Baseball has the Yankees and Athletics. The NFL has the Packers. The NBA has the Lakers, Celtics and Bulls. The NHL has the Maple Leafs, Canadiens and Islanders. College basketball has the UCLA Bruins.

And college football has ... zilch. Of the six major sports, only college football hasn't produced the same national champion in three consecutive years.

Nebraska is loaded with talent and certainly will make a run at a three-peat. But if history is any indication, the Cornhuskers will stumble at some point.

Since 1936, when The Associated Press launched its first media poll, nine teams have finished atop one or both of the two major wire-service polls in back-to-back years. But all nine failed to make it three in a row.

There were some close calls. The only blemish on Army's 1946 record was a famous 0-0 tie with Notre Dame. Army, which finished the season less impressively than Notre Dame, slipped to second in the final AP poll behind the Fighting Irish, who won the first of two consecutive AP championships. That streak ended in 1948, when a 9-0 Notre Dame team tied Southern California in its season finale and finished second behind undefeated Michigan. After winning national championships in 1964 and '65, Alabama went 11-0 in 1966 but finished third in the final rankings behind Notre Dame and Michigan State, which had played to a 10-10 tie that season and had otherwise unblemished records. Ironically, Alabama had posted imperfect records (10-1 and 9-1-1) in its national championship seasons.

The six other potential three-peaters and their final records in those seasons: Minnesota (5-4 in '42), Oklahoma twice (10-1 in '57 and 9-2-1 in '76), Texas (8-3 in '71), Nebraska (9-2-1 in '72) and, most recently, Alabama (10-2 in '80).

Good luck, Huskers. ♦



Devaney's '72 Nebraska team came close to a third consecutive title.

TSN ARCHIVES

----- FIT FOR A CONCERT -----

If Indiana gets on a roll this fall, it has a rocker to thank.

John Mellencamp helped the Hoosiers build a new house to practice in, and it's not little or pink (although Indiana did look a bit girlish in going 0-8 in the Big Ten last season). "It's a great practice site and another commitment to championship football at Indiana," says Indiana coach Bill Mallory, whose team hasn't had an indoor facility.

Mellencamp, who hails from nearby Seymour, Ind., provided a major gift to Indiana to help build the \$5.9 million, 96,129-square

foot Mellencamp Pavilion, which was dedicated in April.

What gives with the IU-Mellencamp marriage? Well, several members of the Mellencamp clan are graduates of IU. And Mellencamp, who resides in Bloomington, frequently attends Hoosiers sporting events.

Now, neither wind, rain (on the scarecrow), sleet nor snow will prevent the Hoosiers from getting doused by the elements while practicing. But it's up to Mallory to make sure 1996 isn't a washout like '95. ♦



ASSOCIATED PRESS



GUY ZIMMER / IU PHOTOGRAPHIC SERVICES

While Indiana-born rocker Mellencamp may never play in the Mellencamp Pavilion (right), he can be assured that Hoosiers players surely will.

DO WE HAVE TO PLAY THEM AGAIN?

Part of the pageantry of college football are the great rivalries. Everyone looks forward to Alabama-Auburn, Michigan-Ohio State, Florida-Georgia, USC-UCLA, Texas-Oklahoma, Army-Navy—the list seemingly is endless. Yet while some teams play a conference foe or neighbor nearly every season, they don't really relish the task. The reason? They almost always lose. Herewith a glimpse at some of those Division I-A mismatches.

"Rivalry" (min. 40 games)	Win pct.	Comment
Oklahoma is 61-5-2 vs. Iowa State	.912	Cyclones have scored more than 21 just three times
USC is 47-5-4 vs. Washington State	.875	Washington State has won once since '57
Nebraska is 68-10-2 vs. Kansas State	.863	Huskers have won 27 in a row by an average margin of 31
Notre Dame is 59-9-1 vs. Navy	.862	Navy won five games between '56 and '63, none since
USC is 49-7-4 vs. Oregon State	.850	Trojans have won 21 in a row
Alabama is 65-11-3 vs. Mississippi State	.842	Bulldogs have won once since '57
Alabama is 35-6-2 vs. Mississippi	.837	Rebels have scored more than 21 just five times
Nebraska is 74-14-2 vs. Iowa State	.833	Huskers have win streaks of 15, 14, 11 and 11 in series
Penn State is 48-9-2 vs. West Virginia	.831	Mountaineers have won once since '55
Oklahoma is 71-12-7 vs. Oklahoma State	.828	Sooners have shut out the Cowboys a staggering 30 times
Michigan is 41-9 vs. Indiana	.820	Hoosiers have won twice since '59
Mississippi is 39-8-2 vs. Memphis	.816	Memphis won once in series' first 27 games
Notre Dame is 37-8-2 vs. Northwestern	.809	'Cats won four in a row from '59-62, then none until last year
Oklahoma is 63-14-4 vs. Kansas State	.802	K-State has won the past three—but just five since '34
Ohio State is 56-12-5 vs. Indiana	.801	Hoosiers have won twice since '51
"Rivalry" (min. 30 games)	Win pct.	Comment
Penn State is 35-1-1 vs. Maryland	.959	Terps' victory came in '61, tie in '89
Alabama is 30-1-1 vs. Kentucky	.953	Kentucky has averaged 5 points against Tide
Nebraska is 33-2-1 vs. Oklahoma State	.931	Cowboys won first two games of series

Getting their kicks

Now it can be told—the Hokies have gone soft.

But because they have, Frank Beamer's Virginia Tech team is one of the most proficient teams in Division I-A at blocking kicks, with 29 in the past five seasons.

The secret: Beamer has his special teams practice blocking kicks with a football filled at 50 percent.

"One of the first things we do is bring new guys in, line them up and have them put their hands on that football as it comes off the kicker's foot," Beamer says.

But there's no fear in it for the unsuspecting because the ball isn't inflated and the kicker's not kicking at full speed. "That way, you take all the danger out of it, and the pain out of it, too," Beamer says. "The only time we block kicks at full speed is in a game. By that time, the technique's down, the adrenaline's going ... there's no fear."

Beamer, a finalist for Coach of the Year last season after his Hokies finished 10-2, is getting such a reputation for his special teams that he has been asked to give lectures and clinics several times throughout the offseason. "The kicking defense always comes up," he says.

"Special teams are one-third of your game. It's the quickest way to win a football game. You're talking about big yardage plays, big momentum plays. ... We put a high priority on it, and in the end I think it's kind of a pride thing for our players." ♦



Caught on the Fly

Fly just *knows* this is **Ron Powlus'** year.

• Yessiree, Bob, Fly'll get back to ya about whether Florida Stoops to conquer. The Gators'll make the Wuerffel House's scoreboard spin like Chief Billie's slots, but unless the new D coordinator can rebuild the line and get some young talent to step up at line-backer, the national championship game'll be a(nother) runaway, bay-bee.

• Yeah, yeah, blow gas at Fly about student ath-uh-letes, and then get-taloda the schedules that A.D.s're piecin' together: If BYU plays in the WAC championship and advances to a bowl (OK, so it's about as likely as Cougars O-linemen not holdin'), its game count—including two in August, for cryin' out loud—will be 15, which is exactly how many weeks it'll take Colorado to play its schedule if the Buff-heads reach the Big 12 title game. Now tell Fly what yer course load is, pal.

• Hey, didn't you used to be Johnny Majors? (That '95 league record again, if yer scorin' at home, was the Pitts: oh-fer.)

• Hey-yo, they haven't even teed up the first Big 12 game and Fly's already hearin' how they're gonna trim dead wood when TV comes callin' with a wad-o-money. That's when the old Big Eight'll do the same thinnin' the dear departed SWC did. UTex and TexA&M rid themselves of SMU, TCU, Rice and Houston, but now it's kick the ball, drag Mizzou; kick the ball, drag Iowa State. The Big 12'll look long and hard at those two, Okie State and even K-State. (And, pssst, don't think Tech and Baylor are home free.)

• Finally, the Spies say when you open the new menu at Ol' SC, the tailback *du jour* may not be Delon Washington. Trojans coaches tell Fly there's better talent (and attitudes) that'd be just thulrilled to step in. Washington's five 100-yard games as a soph? Hiss-toe-ree, keed. ♦

WAVE OF THE FUTURE?

Pacific does not have a grand football tradition. Indeed, the school's overall record since it began playing football in 1919 is 346-397-23. The school is perhaps best-known for being the last coaching stop for the immortal Amos Alonzo Stagg, who is third all-time in college football with 314 victories. Pacific's stadium is named after Stagg, who coached 41 years at the University of Chicago and then 14 years at Pacific before retiring in 1946.

That stadium will be vacant this season, as the school of 4,000 in Stockton, Calif., has dropped football to save money; if the program had continued, school president Donald DeRosa said the athletic department's shortfall could have reached \$900,000.

There *will* be a bit of Pacific flavor this season, as 28 Tigers players have found new homes at Division I-A schools.

Pacific is the first Division I-A school to drop football since Fullerton State in 1992; the past three schools to drop Division I-A football were Big West Conference schools: Pacific, Fullerton and Long Beach State, in '91. Pacific was one of the smallest football-playing schools in Division I-A, and its decision left Southern California and Stanford as the only private schools west of the Rockies with Division I-A football teams.

Pacific has sent its share of players to the NFL. Quarterback Eddie LeBaron led the Tigers to an 11-0 season and a No. 10 ranking in 1949 before starring in the NFL with the Washington Redskins. Other former NFL players from Pacific include Bob Lee (coincidentally the current athletic director), Eddie Macon, Dick Bass, Mike Merriweather and Tom Flores.

"I think what's happening is, because of television and the revenues that come from TV and the bowl games, it's created a category within Division I-A of an elite 50-60 schools that really are reaping the benefits of this exposure and the revenues that flow from them, and very little else is spread around," DeRosa said.

DeRosa also said the school would not rule out the possibility of the return of football "at the appropriate level" in the future.

Over the past several seasons, Pacific tried to make up for the budget shortfall by playing a profitable—but brutal—non-conference schedule. Last season, the Tigers received a reported \$840,000 by playing patsies for teams such as Nebraska, Oregon and Arizona.

In Division I-AA, trustees at Siena College decided to drop the football program, then reversed themselves a month later. Trustees first decided that the program was a money drain; when the vote was reversed, it was decided to spend more money than before on the program. Siena has won just two games in the three seasons it has been a Division I-AA member. ♦

Choosing bucks over the Buckeyes

No team has been hurt by underclassmen declaring for the draft more than Ohio State. Consider: The Buckeyes have lost eight players to the NFL a year early in the past five years. Six of those players went in the first round. The rundown:

Player	Year drafted	Round/team
WR Terry Glenn	'96	1st/Patriots
S Roger Harper	'93	2nd/Falcons
LB Craig Powell	'95	1st/Browns
RB Robert Smith	'93	1st/Vikings
DE Alonzo Spellman	'92	1st/Bears
OT Corey Stringer	'95	1st/Vikings
LB Lorenzo Styles	'95	3rd/Falcons
DT Dan Wilkinson	'94	1st/Bengals

And consider this: Wilkinson, Powell, Stringer and Styles would have been seniors on last season's team. And remember that Ohio State was 10-0 and squarely in the national title chase before losing its regular-season finale to Michigan. Who knows—you add Wilkinson, Styles and Powell to last season's defense (Wilkinson and Styles sure were tough against the run while at OSU) and maybe the Buckeyes don't get run over by Michigan. And maybe they go on to the Rose Bowl and finish unbeaten. Hmmm. Sure would've led to some interesting debates. ♦



Wilkinson (99) is just one of the Buckeyes who chose the big leagues over the Big Ten.

MARKETING 101

This will be the second season that the Oklahoma-Texas game is known as the Dr Pepper Red River Shootout. The reason? The Dallas-based Dr Pepper company agreed to be the corporate sponsor of the game in Dallas, guaranteeing each school close to \$125,000 annually.

Texas athletic director DeLoss Dodds said Texas, Oklahoma and Texas A&M would like to secure title sponsorship for all meetings among the three schools in the future. Dodds: "People don't like the commercialism. But it's part of the world we live in; it's part of what we need to do to generate the dollars that we spend on sports programs."

Indeed, John Carbonell—editor and publisher of the monthly newsletter *Regional Sports Report*, which tracks marketing trends in pro, college and high school athletics—says it's surprising that more college games don't have corporate sponsorships.

In the past couple of years, there have been a few games each year that have corporate backing. This season, for example, the Wake Forest-Florida State game will be known as the Dowdy Aviation Football Classic; the Florida Citrus Sports Association approached Wake Forest and persuaded school officials to move the game from Winston-Salem to Orlando for a guaranteed payout of about \$900,000, with Dowdy Aviation as the corporate sponsor. The coming trend, Carbonell predicts, is that national-scale rivalries—Florida-Georgia and games of that ilk—will have corporate sponsors. ♦

SWEET HOME ALABAMA, ER, AUBURN



**Dave
KINDRED**

We'll get to Brother Bill Oliver, a famous defensive coach, and tell how he came to leave the University of Alabama, where as one of Bear Bryant's boys he'd played and worked for 19 years. Not only did he leave, he did the practically treasonous. He went down the road to suit up with Bama's hated rival, Auburn University.

Let's start, though, by saying why the folks at Auburn and Alabama don't much like each other. Let's listen to Forrest Gump. Moviegoers remember ol' Forrest for making those spectacular runs for Bear at Bama.

More precisely, we're listening to Winston Groom, the real writer who created Forrest Gump, a fictional hero.

"Alabama people are fond of branding Auburn as a 'Cow College,'" Groom once wrote. "For their part, Auburn fans accuse Alabama of being a party school for layabout rich kids. Within the state, the sides divide on similar lines. Farmers, big or small, root for Auburn, whether they went there or not. Lawyers and doctors root for Alabama.

"In the 1920s, my mother attended the University of Alabama. ... Also in the '20s, my father played for a short while on Auburn's scrub team. ... So I grew up in the middle of it, and in our household there was peace right up until the day of the game. Then it was every man for himself.

"With the exception of a few sourpusses, there is no middle ground on game day. This is a good thing. They can feel that they belong, and they do. The only thing that is not permissible is for someone to declare they don't care which one wins or loses. These people become pariahs."

It's as easy to understand college football rivalries as it is to understand human nature. It works this way: We all need a prince of darkness in our lives, a force so

mean and ugly and lowdown that in comparison we stand as shining beacons of rectitude and morality in addition to being as handsome as a sunrise.

So Auburn sees Alabama darkly.

And Alabama sees Auburn darkly.

Auburn athletic director David Housel will tell you about a former Auburn cheerleader married to a former president of the Alabama student body. "Married for 25 years," he says, "and they own a suite in our stadium—and they've never sat together at an Auburn-Alabama game."

Naturally, then, Auburn folks don't pick up the telephone and call Alabama folks unless they've thought up something nastier to say than they said the last time.

As an illustration of Alabama's power and arrogance, the Crimson Tide in nearly a hundred years never ventured to Auburn—until 1989. To make such a trip would have been to certify Auburn as an equal. Only after Auburn had captured a national title, won some Southeastern Conference championships and expanded its stadium to 85,000 seats and beaten



Bill Oliver, so closely identified with the Tide, is a perfect fit in his alma mater's crimson, but ...

Alabama with some regularity after Bear Bryant's death—only then did Alabama deign to drive the 150 miles to Auburn.

As an illustration of Auburn's pride and strength of conviction, here's what Auburn's Housel, then sports information director, said that day in 1989 when Alabama came to town with a 10-0 record:

"And when we get 'em in here, we're gonna slam the gate behind 'em and not let 'em out till we're done with 'em."

Auburn beat Bama, 30-20. "It was the most emotional day in Auburn history," Housel says. "That morning, we were sold out of programs by 10 a.m. There were so many blue shakers in the stadium that the sun coming through the blue left a blue haze over the field. It was a turning point in the way Auburn people looked at themselves. Grown men wept at what they saw that day. Alabama on that day never had a chance."

Imagine Bill Oliver's state of mind, then, when he picked up the telephone at his home in Tuscaloosa one day last winter and heard an Auburn man say, "Come work for us."

Because a dentist had extracted a bunch of infected teeth, junior defensive back Bill Oliver had a mouth full of furious pain and didn't play for Alabama on a day in 1960 when he learned what made Paul Bryant Bear Bryant.

In those days, a football team down 15-0 at halftime was in deep trouble against a Bobby Dodd-coached Georgia Tech team.

"Fifteen-nothin' was like thirtysomethin'-nothin' today," Oliver said one day in a spring 36 years later. "But Coach Bryant went around the locker room cool as can be. He talked with his assistant coaches, he talked to some players.

"Then when we went back out on the field, he called all of us together and said, 'Now you've got 'em where you want 'em.'"

Maybe his hair is gray now and maybe the sharp face is fleshier. But the smile is a kid's, born of Alabama's victory that day, 16-15. And as Bill Oliver sits in his Auburn University office overlooking the Tigers' practice fields, he says that story shows what folks can do if they do it together. He calls it a "one-ness."

His sister called him Brother. So it has been Brother Oliver ever since. He has a coach's clicker in hand, running a video tape of an Auburn game from last fall. He wears a gray windbreaker with the orange-and-blue AU logo and tiger's head. On his desk: tapes of Auburn against Florida, Georgia and LSU. Also: nine piles of white paper with precisely drawn X's and O's with the wiggles and waggles of defensive movement.

On a sunny winter's day, six months before kickoff, Brother Oliver is at work dreaming up ways for Auburn to win football games. Yes, Brother Oliver at Auburn—who'd have thunk it?

He is as famous as college assistants

get, his name practically synonymous with Alabama after those 19 seasons as player and coach for Bryant and coach for the Bear's latest successor, Gene Stallings. Oliver's resume has five national championships, one as a player and four as a coach: 1961, 1973, 1978, 1979 and 1992, all at Alabama.

Asked to describe the Auburn-Alabama relationship, Oliver fixes his pale eyes on a listener and bites off this: "Fierce."

So how does a Bear Bryant disciple, an Alabama graduate, a man so closely identified with Alabama that even when he went away for a spell or two he always was welcome to come back—how does a Bama man fashioned by a fierce rivalry wind up with an Auburn tiger's head on his chest?

Oliver isn't the only man ever to coach for both Auburn and Alabama. Pat Dye began as a Bryant assistant before winding up as Auburn's boss, and Wayne Hall stepped up from a position coach's job at Bama to become Auburn's defensive coordinator.

But Oliver is the only man who now has

pened between Stallings and Oliver, the team's defensive coordinator the last three seasons. Educated opinion holds that Oliver was promised the coach's job: "Always my dream," Oliver says. But Stallings changed his mind about retirement, resented Oliver's presence and showed him the door just as he had done with his offensive coordinator, Homer Smith.

Well, in such a case, what's a disaffected Alabama man supposed to do when another great program comes calling? And what if that great program is Auburn's?

An intermediary for Auburn coach Terry Bowden made the first call. Bill Oliver remembers it: "When he said what he was calling about, I couldn't talk for a minute and a half. Surprised? I was shocked to no end."

As to how an Alabama man could cross over to Auburn, Oliver has a three-word explanation that anyone in big-time college football understands: "Business is business."

Bowden needed a defensive coordinator.

year.

"We'd heard Bill might take retirement and go out of state to coach somewhere, meaning he could get the equivalent of two full-time salaries," Bowden said. "So our job was to persuade him to stay in Alabama, but with us."

Not for a second did Bowden pause simply because Oliver was an Alabama man. "We knew he was leaving the staff, whatever happened," Bowden said. "And we'd heard of Spurrier's interest. As a matter of fact, the day Bill agreed to our job, Spurrier called him. But there was never any question Bill would honor his commitment to us."

And now Brother Oliver hopes to do at Auburn what he hoped to do at Alabama: build defenses that will run on your belly. To hear him describe Alabama's 1979 national champions' defense is to understand his passion:

"That team, literally, not exaggerating, to get to the ballcarrier, if there was a guy that was on the ground, they would run on that guy's body—not on the ground, on the guy's belly or back—and they'd be digging with such force that we'd be hearing the jerseys ripping. The darn truth. Saw it happen. Heard it. Why'd they do it so hard? One-ness."

After pointing out the defensive toughness of Alabama's '92 national champions—the offense didn't score a touchdown in one game and had only one in another but the Crimson Tide went undefeated—Oliver smiled and added: "Of course, my senior year when we won Coach Bryant's first national championship, we didn't give up but 25 points all year."

Such passion is clear to Terry Bowden, who says of the defenses Oliver has built for Bama: "Very aggressive, but not recklessly aggressive. Controlled. Fundamentally sound. You click on video tapes, you see two or three defensive teams that stand out each year. Alabama's stood out every year. They played full speed all the time. They did the hardest thing, too: They contained the deep third of the field, meaning they stopped the run and wouldn't let you get an easy one, either."

Brother Bill Oliver is 56 years old. Curious things happen, surely, but his dream of being the coach at Alabama likely is over. That's all right. Maybe he'll stay at Auburn until it's really time to retire. All he knows for sure today is that it was the right time to move on from Tuscaloosa.

"I didn't get one negative letter, not one negative phone call about taking the Auburn job," he says. "All I heard were congratulations. Of course, some people might have been saying something I didn't hear. But those people didn't know the story. Those are people with nothing to 'em."

He was asked, again, if leaving Alabama for the hated rival gave him any pause. "No, because I don't think of it that way. They're 'fierce' rivals, but they both do it with class. And I'm not going to say anything that burns bridges. I have too much respect for both programs to do that." ♦

Dave Kindred is a contributing writer for THE SPORTING NEWS.



... he has no qualms about wearing the blue and orange of fierce opponent Auburn. Oliver says the programs have a common trait—class—and he no doubt will attempt to instill a feeling of "one-ness" in the Tigers.

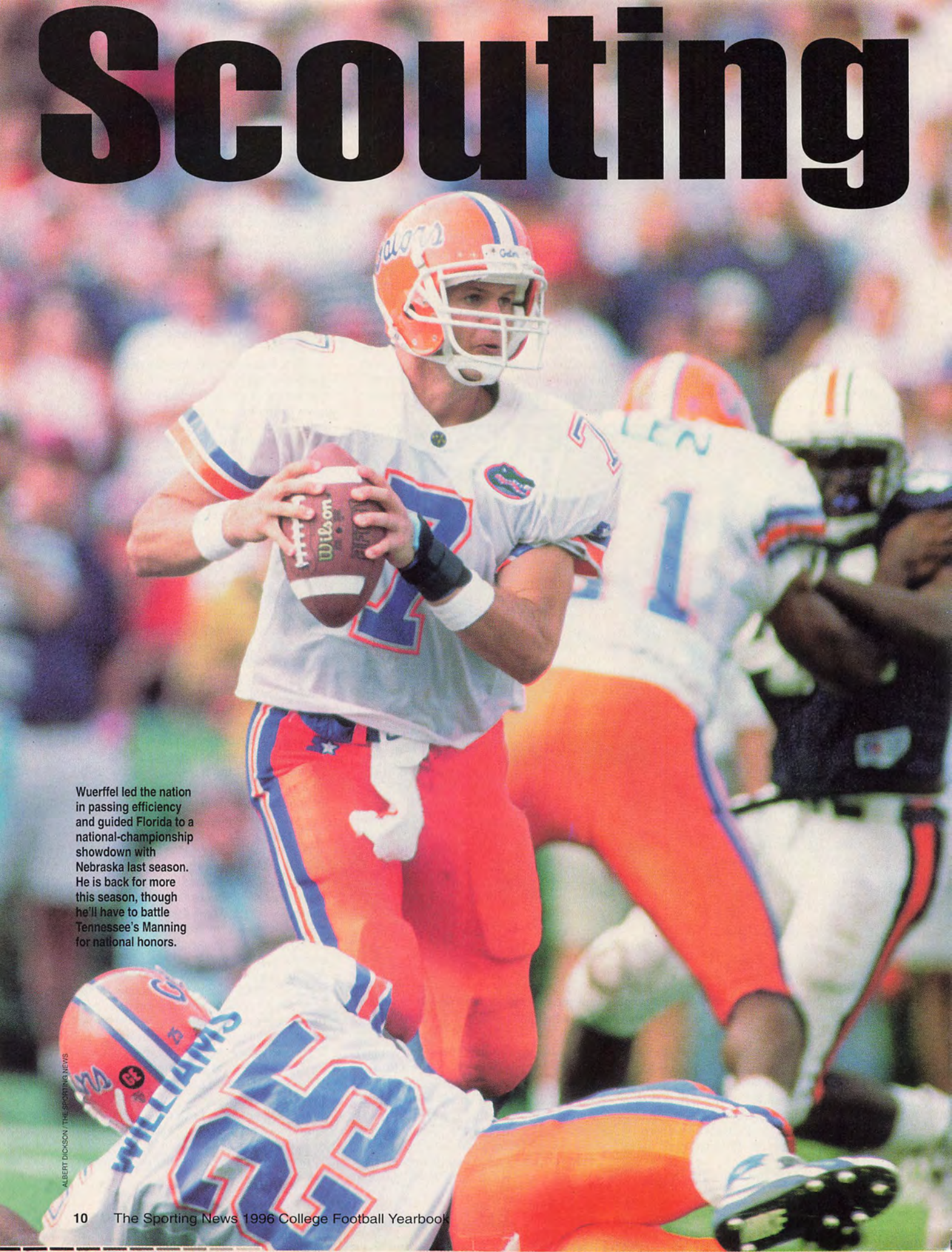
worked for each side *twice*. In 1966, he took his first college job at Auburn and left after five seasons to work for Bryant. In 1980, he left Bryant for a wandering that took him to Tennessee-Chattanooga, Memphis (USFL) and Clemson. He returned to Alabama in 1990 to work for Stallings.

No one says for the record what hap-

It was public record that Oliver had applied for early retirement. It was coaching knowledge that Oliver and Stallings were about to fall out, with Oliver taking retirement and looking for a job, maybe at Florida with Steve Spurrier. "Could've been possibilities," Oliver says.

But Bowden came with a preemptive bid, a package worth maybe \$200,000 a

Scouting



Wuerffel led the nation in passing efficiency and guided Florida to a national-championship showdown with Nebraska last season. He is back for more this season, though he'll have to battle Tennessee's Manning for national honors.

the Nation

Say hello to the Big 12, the really big WAC (16 teams), Conference USA and two more league title games



Ivan
MAISEL

You've fretted all summer. You've watched tape. You've run the game stats through the family computer. You've visited every home page so often you're finishing your signature with ".edu." You've got to know: Is the Big 12 South stronger top to bottom than the SEC West? Is the WAC Mountain better than the WAC Pacific? At the end of October, do they become the Mountain Standard and Pacific Standard? Is the Big 12 North the same as the Big Six? (Answer: No, the Big Six was Christy Mathewson.)

You don't need just a program this fall, you need an atlas, a compass and a lot of patience. In a sport where faces change yet tradition endures, the opposite has become true. In the wake of Northwestern's trip to the Rose Bowl, it's obvious the old rules are obsolete, anyway.

College football is ready to embark on its greatest season of change since the scholarship limitations of the 1970s and 1980s. The Southwest Conference is gone, its children dispersed as in some sort of three-way custody battle. The rich kids merged with the Big Eight to become the Big 12; the older, creakier ones went to the WAC, now an unwieldy 16-team configuration. The unwanted one, Houston, latched onto the new Conference USA, a basketball league that will endure football in the fall. (Hey, the ACC did that for years.)

The SEC, once mocked for its money-grabbing playoff, now has been mocked in a different sense. Both the Big 12 and the WAC will stage playoff games like the SEC. December 7, usually a solemn day, will be a day of tripleheader league championships on ABC. Think of it as the preseason for the postseason barrage of New Year's Day.

The effect of league championships will be substantive. The Big 12 coaches voted against the playoff only to be ignored by their presidents. Schools accustomed to playing seven conference games now must play eight just for the opportunity to play a ninth, an all-or-nothing league title game. "We went from playing six to seven to eight," former Georgia coach Ray Goff said of the SEC transition. "When you're playing eight, every game in the conference is important. That was very difficult. You've got to keep your players up. We went 6-2 in 1992 and Florida beats us by two points, so it didn't mean anything. You're a dog."

Alabama went 11-0 in 1994 and lost to Florida by one point in the

SEC championship game. Although the Crimson Tide, lodged behind Nebraska and Penn State in the rankings, didn't have much of a chance to win the national championship, they lost whatever chance they had with the 12th game. Presumably, the SEC presidents all patted Gene Stallings sympathetically as they made their way to the bank. Such will be the case in the Big 12 and the WAC.

Though the leagues have changed, the stars have not. For the first time since the NFL began avidly drafting underclassmen, the top four rushers in Division I-A return. Iowa State's Troy Davis, Toledo's Wasean Tait, San Diego State's George Jones and Northwestern's Darnell Autry averaged 1,858 yards and 18 touchdowns last season. Among the passers, two of the top three in efficiency—Florida's Danny Wuerffel and Syracuse's Donovan McNabb—return, albeit in the shadow cast by 6-5 junior Peyton Manning of Tennessee, who must decide whether to return for his senior season or be content to be the most loved man in the state since Elvis.

Though the leagues are different, the teams in them remain largely the same. Nebraska brings a 25-game winning streak into the season. The battle for the state championship in Florida will continue to have national repercussions. Notre Dame should return to No. 1 discussion after a two-year absence.

The season also will mark the saturation of college football on television. Suffice it to say that every network save the TV Food Channel will be tied up on Saturdays, unless, of course, that "Cooking with the Coaches" show is picked up (next week: John Cooper shows how the Buckeyes make a Cobb Salad come to life!). It's all part of the new-old world of college football.

DRESS-DOWN SATURDAYS

Ties no longer are appropriate in college football. Appropriate? They're not even possible. With a decisiveness that bordered on the incredible—this is, after all, an NCAA committee—the NCAA Football Rules Committee installed a tiebreaker in the regular season. The day before the committee met, its chair, Georgia athletic director Vince Dooley, knocked down the idea that it might pass. Dooley said the tiebreaker had no mandate.

Oh, but it did. The I-A coaches, meeting at the American Football Coaches Association convention in January, approved the idea almost unanimously. Their endorsement swayed Dooley's committee in no uncertain terms. Coaches, being the conservative lot that they are, traditionally have preferred the safe haven of a non-loss rather than be forced to try to win. Some of them endorsed the tiebreaker without believing it would pass. Imagine their surprise when the committee reacted so quickly. AFCA executive director Grant Teaff said he received calls from his members around the country shocked that their endorsement actually meant something.

There is a practical reason for eliminating the ties. With 19 bowls to be filled this season, Division I-A needs all the six-victory teams it can muster. Ties prevented teams such as Illinois (5-5-1), Wisconsin (4-5-2) and Oklahoma (5-5-1) from qualifying for the postseason last year.



ELSA HASCH / THE SPORTING NEWS

Matt Sherman and his Iowa teammates are a squad to watch this fall. The Hawkeyes are a program on the rise—and may rise high enough to win the Big Ten.

UP, UP AND AWAY

Five programs on the rise:

1. **Houston:** The Cougars have a new athletic building, a solid, tough coach in Kim Helton and a league—Conference USA—filled with similar teams. Forget next year. Houston may leap forward now.

2. **TCU:** Pat Sullivan tried to go to LSU but couldn't. Now his Horned Frogs will try to take quick advantage of being in a new, easier-to-handle WAC.

3. **Arizona State:** It took Bruce Snyder five seasons to turn around Cal. This is his fifth season in Tempe and the Sun Devils are about to turn around.

4. **Iowa:** When will Hayden Fry give it up? We give up. It's clear this season will be one of the high notes in his 35 seasons as a coach.

5. **Mississippi:** The Rebels will endure the worst this season, their second on NCAA probation, but Tommy Tuberville has the team on the right track.

HYPED UP

Two events in 1994 set off the evolution of the college football postseason into the Bowl Alliance. The conference realignments necessitated a change of some sort. The sudden, abortive attempt by a faction within the NCAA to institute a playoff never got past a

phone book-sized study. But the threat of the playoff forced the bowls and conferences (old and new) to devise an arrangement to match the best teams regardless of conference.

The public wanted a college Super Bowl, a spectacle that celebrated the sport as Americana. But as that noted college football expert Oscar "Beano" Wilde said, "When the gods wish to punish us, they answer our prayers." A Super Bowl also means a lopsided game, one in which the spectacle overwhelms one of the teams. Of the many reasons that Nebraska defeated Florida, 62-24, in the Fiesta Bowl, it became clear that the Cornhuskers knew how to handle the pressure of a championship game and the Gators didn't.

A Super Bowl is a big event for corporate America. The first Alliance championship game displayed all of the trappings of a big event. Corporate logos were on everything in and around the Fiesta Bowl. The SEC (Southeastern Conference) didn't have nearly as good a game as the SEC (Securities and Exchange Commission). Yet the NFL and NCAA figured out, with the Super Bowl and the Final Four, respectively, how to celebrate the event, not the sponsors.

A Super Bowl diminishes everything that goes before it. The Rose, Orange and Citrus bowls put on exciting matches January 1, but ratings for everything except the Rose suffered. The Rose got its customary attention—even without the Northwestern story line, the Rose is the only game that a blue-haired matron in

IT'S HERE!



The Sporting News

O N L I N E

Hey-yo, Fly may be 110 years old, but he's not too long in the stylist (shaddup!) to learn how to surf. Online, that is. The Spies say **The Sporting News** and **America Online** are double-teamin' cyberspace, combining some of the stuff you

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STEPHEN DUNN/ALLSPORT



JAMIE SQUIRE/ALLSPORT

USC's McCutcheon (above) and Tennessee's Manning (with his dad, Archie) are proof that the son often rises—and sometimes above the father.

Bloomington, Ill., will remember to watch—but the latter two largely went ignored before and after they took place.

It may be that the problems of the Alliance's first year can be solved with nothing more than a pretty day and closer games. It may be that Nebraska put one of the greatest teams of all time on the field against Florida. It's hard to come up with any team of recent vintage that would have challenged the performance of the Cornhuskers on that cool desert night (Notre Dame of 1988? Miami of 1989? Alabama of 1992?). The challenge for the Sugar Bowl—which has the 1-2 matchup this season—is to make the game the thing.

PROUD POPS

The season hasn't begun and already Tennessee quarterback Peyton Manning is the player to beat for the Heisman Trophy, the Davey O'Brien Award and, should he write anything for the Tennessee student newspaper, the Pulitzer Prize. Manning's ability has focused the spotlight on his relationship with his father, former NFL great Archie Manning. Peyton also has brought attention to other sons of former pro stars. In the pedigree game, it's a good year for quarterbacks, wide receivers and defensive backs.

Backing up Manning on any All-Dad team would be Brian Griese of Michigan and a pair of would-be throwers at Boston College, Matt and Tim Hasselbeck. Their father, Don, played tight end for the New England Patriots.

Catching these passes would be Clemson star Antwan Wyatt, whose father, Alvin, returned kicks for years with Buffalo, and

Northwestern veteran Brian Musso, whose dad, Johnny, was a star for Alabama and played with the Chicago Bears. Don't forget tight end Josh Wilcox, who will be a third-year starter for Oregon. His dad, Dave, played linebacker for the Ducks and San Francisco 49ers.

The secondary would feature corners Daylon (son of Lawrence) McCutcheon of USC and Shawn (son of Ron) Springs of Ohio State, along with safeties Charles Young of Stanford and John Fuqua of Louisville. Young's dad, Charle, was a standout NFL tight end; Fuqua's father, Frenchy, defined style of several sorts with the Pittsburgh Steelers. McCutcheon and Springs have a good chance of being All-American teammates before the season ends.

The coach of any such second-generation squad? Auburn's Terry Bowden, of course.

FEEL THE NOISE

Five loudest stadiums:

1. **Florida Field, Florida.** Take any heavy-metal album, crank it, then place your speakers in a tin basement. That sounds like a library compared to the Swamp.
2. **Jordan-Hare Stadium, Auburn.** The stadium goes straight up, so the sound can't escape.
3. **Ohio Stadium, Ohio State.** It's a wonder the horseshoe hasn't crumbled. You know Woody Hayes' stadium is made of stout stuff.
4. **Carrier Dome, Syracuse.** The sound has nowhere to go and makes 50,000 people sound like a million.
5. **Kyle Field, Texas A&M.** They're loud and they're proud. Mostly they're loud.

SCHEDULING 101

- Tennessee plays nine games within state borders. The Volunteers have six home games, close the season at Vanderbilt and happily agreed with Ole Miss' decision to move its home game against Tennessee to Memphis. The Vols also play Memphis at Memphis.

- Notre Dame plays two games in October and five in November. For years, Lou Holtz has wanted an off week during midterm exams. Now he has it. Notre Dame also has a shot at playing on three continents. The Irish and Navy moved their game

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A familiar sight this season should be Iowa State's Davis running wild. But don't expect to see that happen in '97—Davis likely will have left for the NFL.

to Dublin, Ireland. If Notre Dame doesn't qualify for the Bowl Alliance, the Irish likely would play in the Haka Bowl in Auckland, New Zealand, on December 26.

- North Carolina had been scheduled to open on the road September 7 at Syracuse. But thanks to the ACC's last-minute conference scheduling—an idea adopted from basketball so that the league may spread its best games evenly over the course of the season for television—the Tar Heels' home game against ACC foe Clemson has been moved to August 31. By the first Saturday in September, North Carolina will have met teams who went a combined 17-7 last season.

- Kansas State has won a combined 28 games over the past three seasons because Bill Snyder loaded up on patsies while having to play only seven conference games. Now the Wildcats must play eight Big 12 games. Result: Temple and Akron off the schedule, Texas Tech and Texas A&M on. Snyder managed to sneak I-AA Indiana State in there, though.

- Like Tennessee, Florida State will play nine games within its borders. Two would-be road games still are "road" games, but both will be in Florida. Thanks to big-buck guarantees from groups in Orlando and south Florida, the Seminoles will play Wake Forest in Orlando and Maryland in Miami. FSU also plays at Miami.

PUNT THE POLLS

The American Football Coaches Association has suggested that polls not begin until the middle of the season. When The Associated Press began polling in the 1930s, it waited until mid-October. The AFCA is pursuing fairness—often one team is ranked ahead of another simply because that's how they began the season. The AFCA also is pursuing a break for its members. No polls, no pressure. So, the coaches say, let's go back to the way it used to be. Dream on.

Polls began to sell papers. They continue to sell papers. Papers don't wait to come out until the middle of the season. They are printed every day. Here and now, we will reveal our cure-all plan for the ill effects the polls have on the bowls. It's fairly complicated, so bear with us.

Stop using them.

That's it. That's the plan. If the polls aren't doing the job, stop using them. No one designed the polls to serve as the official arbiter of the sport. The Alliance could appoint a seven-man committee made up of bowl presidents, athletic directors within its five

leagues and Notre Dame. Draw up guidelines similar to what the NCAA does every March. Committee members recuse themselves when they have a direct interest in the outcome.

Polls can go back to the business of being a harmless doodad. The media can get out of the kingmaking business—officially, at least.

THEY'VE PAID THEIR DUES

Five coaches who deserve better jobs:

1. **Steve Logan, East Carolina:** Hey, pay attention out there. He has the Pirates in a bowl game every year. What else does he have to do?

2. **Spike Dykes, Texas Tech:** On the other hand, taking Dykes out of Lubbock would be like serving chicken fried steak at Ruth's Chris.

3. **Gary Blackney, Bowling Green:** Family ties keep him in the MAC, but he could do some damage in the Top 25 elsewhere.

4. **Gary Barnett, Northwestern:** Actually, he turned his job into one of the better jobs.

5. **Your name here:** For every Osborne, Paterno and Bobby Bowden, there are 20 coaches who believe they are ready to make the move up.

FOR HIRE

Three assistants waiting for the right job:

1. **Mike Riley, USC offensive coordinator:** Riley has turned down the CFL and been choosy about where he has interviewed. He's the front-runner to replace John Robinson down the road.

2. **Bob Davie, Notre Dame defensive coordinator:** He turned down Baylor some years ago and made a run at California last winter. When Lou Holtz went down last year, Davie proved he could handle the media. Players love to play for him.

3. **Fran Ganter, Penn State offensive coordinator:** He turned down Michigan State two years ago. The logical guy to replace Joe Paterno, if Ganter lives that long.

SCHOOL'S OUT

Five underclassmen playing their last season:

1. **Peyton Manning, QB, Tennessee:** What Troy Aikman is to the 1990s, what Dan Marino was to the 1980s and, yes, what his daddy was to the 1970s.

2. **Orlando Pace, OT, Ohio State:** Give him credit for knowing he was too young last winter. He can't be held back any longer.

3. **Darnell Autry, RB, Northwestern:** He's not leaving for the NFL. He wants to leave so he can take an acting job that pays.

4. **Ike Hilliard, WR, Florida:** He led the SEC last year in yards per catch (17.7) as second banana to Chris Doering. Now he has Danny Wuerffel to himself—but Wuerffel won't be around next year.

5. **Troy Davis, TB, Iowa State:** He may not rush for 2,000 yards again, but behind an experienced line led by left tackle Tim Kohn, he'll get enough. Another great season won't leave anything to prove.

READY, SET, CHANNEL SURF

Circle September 21 on your calendar, then circle the wagons. Don't let anyone interrupt what will be the best remote-control Saturday of the season. Eight teams with great dreams will play each other with something significant at stake.

The marquee game will be Florida at Tennessee, a pair of preseason Top 5 teams that have developed what used to be another SEC game into an orange-hot rivalry. The winner takes control of the SEC East. The early front-runner in the SEC West will be the winner of the LSU at Auburn game, which ESPN is expected to move to that night.

An accurate measure of Pac-10 dark horse Arizona State will be made when two-time defending national champion Nebraska returns to Sun Devil Stadium. The Cornhuskers scored 62 points on their last visit and scored 77 in their last game against Arizona State. You may recall that didn't sit well with Sun Devils coach Bruce Snyder, who lashed out at Tom Osborne after the game because the Nebraska scrubs completed a long bomb for a touchdown.

Finally, two Top 10 teams will meet at Memorial Stadium in Austin, Texas, when Notre Dame makes its first visit to Texas since the 19th-ranked Irish upset the fifth-ranked Longhorns, 14-3, in 1952. This game also will serve as a bellwether of the Longhorns' ability to control the Big 12 South.

NORTHWESTERN WANNABES

Three schools that could make the long leap to respectability this fall:

1. **Houston (2-9 last season):** The Cougars have 19 returning

starters. The schedule, still too hard, is easier (Florida, Texas, Texas A&M and Texas Tech out; LSU, USC and North Carolina in). With new facilities and Kim Helton's commitment to rebuild the right way, three years of patience will pay off.

2. **Hawaii (4-8):** Fred vonAppen brings 30 years of coaching experience in the NFL and colleges to Honolulu. The offensive staff, led by former Stanford All-Americans Guy Benjamin and Ken Margerum, will convert the punchless Rainbow Warriors to the West Coast offense.

3. **California (3-8):** Keith Gilbertson recruited well, but he couldn't convert that into success on the field. New coach Steve Mariucci, who comes from Green Bay's coaching staff, will teach the West Coast offense to nine returning starters, including quarterback Pat Barnes, tight end Tony Gonzalez and tackle Tarik Glenn.

SENSE OF URGENCY

Two Bills that have come due (and three other coaches who must win):

1. **Bill Mallory, Indiana:** The Hoosiers lost their last five games last season by an average of 27 points. Attendance (34,296) ranked last in the Big Ten. The Hoosiers need to stop hemorrhaging.

2. **Bill Curry, Kentucky:** If he didn't get it done off the field, Curry would be long gone. Decency and honesty have gotten him through six seasons. Can his Wildcats get him to a seventh?

3. **Jackie Sherrill, Mississippi State:** The school will put up with Sherrill as long as he wins. But after a 3-8 mark in '95 and an NCAA probation on his watch, Sherrill may be wearing out his welcome.

4. **Tom Rossley, SMU:** Will the switch to the WAC change his luck? Injuries have consistently ripped apart the Mustangs. New athletic director Jim Copeland resisted the urge to make a change after he saw what it would cost. But he'd like his own guy, nonetheless.

5. **Jim Colletto, Purdue:** Coaches do not live by offense alone. He has rebuilt the crumbling foundation handed him by Fred Akers. With most of his defense returning, Colletto should enjoy a winning season. If not, watch out. ♦

Ivan Maisel covers college football for Newsday and writes a weekly college football column for THE SPORTING NEWS.



ANDY LYONS / ALLSPORT

There's no question that Kentucky's Curry is a class guy. But if his 'Cats don't get it done on the field, Curry could be looking for another job.

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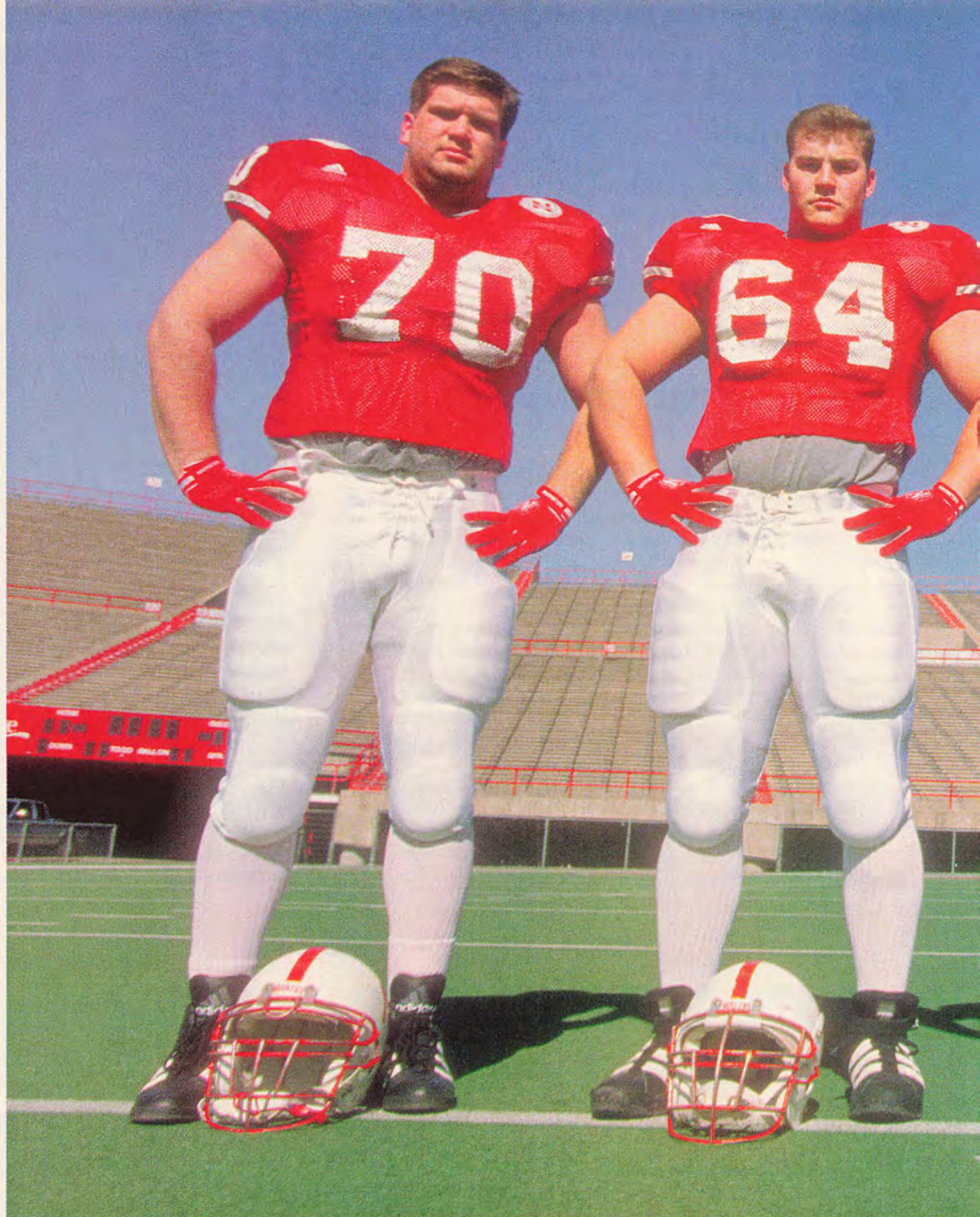
ALL-AMERICAN TEAM



Tom Lemming's First Team All-Americans At Disney World

(Back Row) Travis Carls (11), Jason Ching, Robus French, Joe Gubinski, Eric Jefferson, Alexander Jackson, Zac Zedalis, (Middle Row) Brad Williams (76), Titus Pettigrew (5), Richard Casey (12), Tim Couch (2), Quincy Carter (3), Buck Gurley (88), Andy Kabanmayer (45), Jeff Backus (75), (1st Row Squatting) Courtney Leavitt, Mike Burden, Pat Pass (4), Tom Hendricks, Duwayne Goodrich (4), Ron Dayne (33)

Nebraska doesn't recruit offensive linemen, it creates the up-front talent out of nowhere—thanks to foresight, redshirting, coaching and, last but not least, a world-class weight room



Corn - fed

BY TERRY FREI

We've got one little problem: I can't find Chris Dishman's hometown on the map of the central United States in the Nebraska football media guide, which—as at all major programs—doubles as a recruiting brochure.

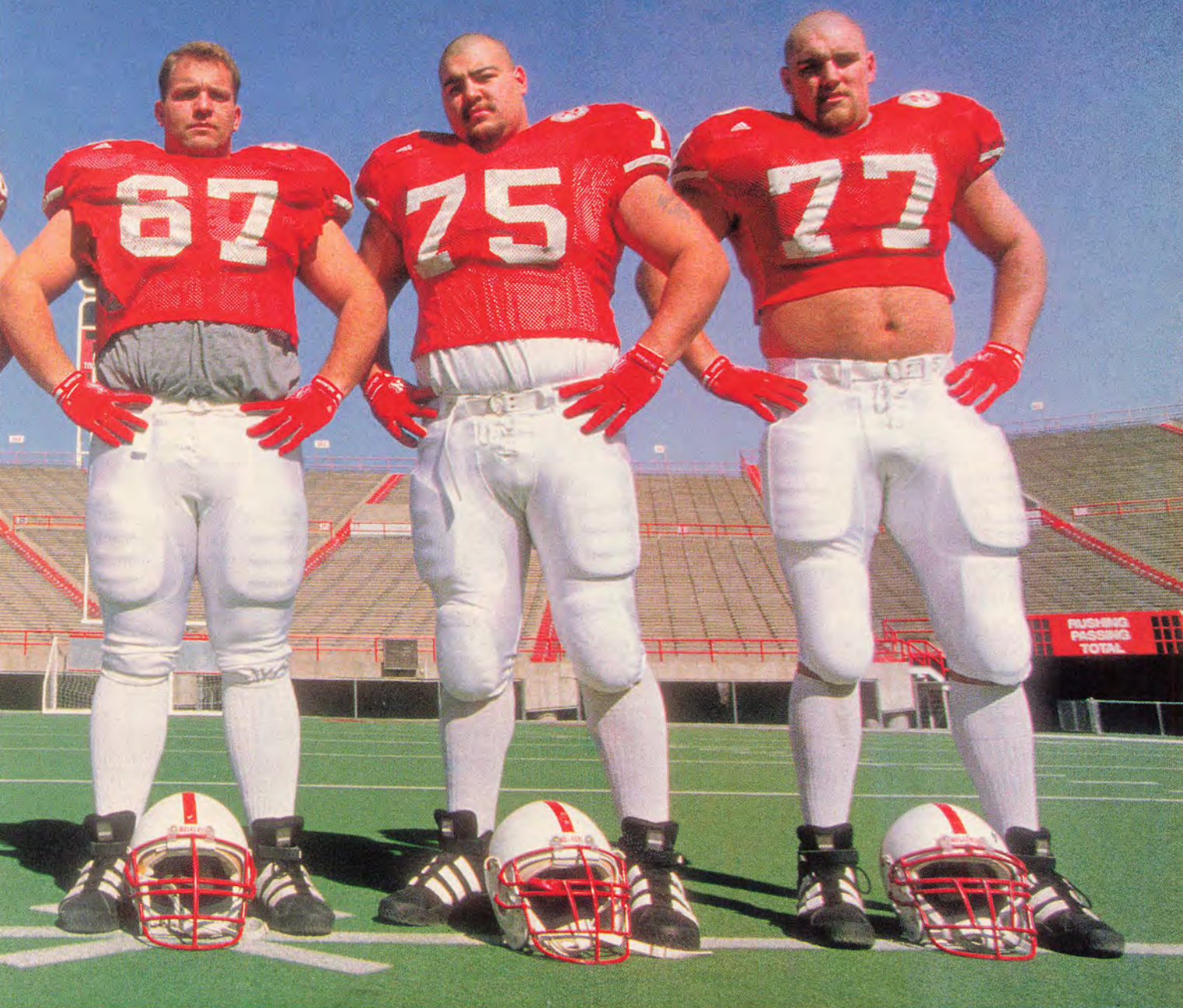
The map places Lincoln at the center of the uni-

verse and tells prospects they would be 482 miles from Denver, 589 from Dallas, 194 from Kansas City and 56 from Omaha. It seems to have a dot for every town from Glendive, Mont., in the upper left corner, to Hattiesburg, Miss., in the bottom right.

But Cozad, Neb., doesn't jump out at me.

"Let me see that," says Dishman, a senior guard. He takes the map, ready to point and enlighten me.

I wait. Dishman squints, then laughs. He takes



Beef

my pen. "Well, if it were on here," he says, "it would be ... abouuuut ... here."

This is how page 33 in my Nebraska media guide came to have a little green mark a little south of Interstate-80, between North Platte and Kearney in the western part of the state.

On last season's national championship team, the quarterback (Tommie Frazier) came from Florida, the best running back (Lawrence Phillips) from California, the two defensive

linemen brothers (Jason and Christian Peter) from New Jersey and the best linebacker (Terrell Farley) from Georgia. This is a program that boasts of a national recruiting base. Last season's team included players from 26 states.

Yet Dishman's borrowed pen illustrates where the two-time defending national champions often find their offensive linemen. Out of Nowhere, in more ways than one.

For example, the 1994 Outland Trophy winner, tackle Zach Wiegert, hails from Fremont, Neb., which is—where's that map? ... hold on ... there!—just west of Omaha. The 1983 Outland winner, guard Dean Steinkuhler, was from Burr, Neb., which is—um ... well—nowhere to be found.

The "experts" who rate recruiting classes rarely have any of Nebraska's future offensive linemen on their lists of the nation's most highly regarded prospects. Most of the linemen Nebraska signs receive few scholarship offers from other schools. But even when the Cornhuskers lose some of their best linemen, it

The husky Cornhuskers' offensive line (mostly home-grown): From left—Eric Anderson, Jon Zatechka, Aaron Taylor, Chris Dishman and Adam Treu.

PHOTOS BY
**ALBERT
DICKSON**

seems to matter not a bit. Their running backs still have gigantic holes to run through the very next season. Few Nebraska linemen become NFL successes, but pro potential is not an issue on autumn Saturdays in Lincoln.

Remember last year? The Huskers were returning one offensive line starter, center Aaron Graham. The big question in the preseason: Would Phillips and Frazier have enough room and time to operate? It was a silly question, as it usually is when the subject is the Nebraska offensive line.

To oversimplify, the Huskers *recruit* talent at other positions and *create* it on the offensive line. That isn't revolutionary, whether the program is Nebraska or New Mexico State, but this is the one place where it has become, well, a science.

How do the Huskers do it?

1. They recruit high school players with big frames and at least a hint of athletic talent. And they recruit so many of them, as scholarship players and as walk-ons, that they could choose up sides and have a genuine 11-on-11 flag scrimmage on a Tuesday afternoon in spring practice if they wanted to.

2. They redshirt them, or at least most of them. The last notable exception was guard Will Shields, who was such a quick study and so physically mature when he came to Nebraska from Lawton, Okla., that he played as a true freshman in 1989. Shields won the Outland his senior year. Most Nebraska offensive linemen don't start as true freshmen, but they are starting by their junior and senior seasons.

3. They teach them well. In a business noted for having "young turk" coaches who often are learning on the job themselves, Milt Tenopir has been the offensive line coach on Tom Osborne's staff for 23 years. Under his tutelage, five Huskers have won the Outland and two have won the Lombardi; 17 have been All-Americans.

4. They sit back and watch them develop. And dominate. The five blockers Nebraska puts on the field on fall Saturdays and in big bowl games usually end up kicking the posteriors of more highly recruited, highly touted and—ultimately—higher drafted defensive linemen and linebackers.

Sometimes, because of the Huskers' strong talent at the skill positions, that kind of domination isn't necessary. But it happens so often at Nebraska, it can't be an accident.

This year, there are fewer questions than usual. Three full-time starters return—Dishman, Aaron Taylor and Eric Anderson. Anderson, a 6-4, 300-pound junior, will stay at tackle, but Tenopir plans to shuffle the other starters. Taylor, a 6-1, 305-pound junior, is moving from guard to center, replacing the departed Graham. Dishman, listed at 6-3, 310, will move from tackle to guard. The other starters are expected to be junior guard Jon Zatechka, a 6-2, 290-pounder whose brother, Rob, was a two-year starter at tackle ('93 and '94); and senior tackle Adam Treu (6-6, 300).

cided that a big guy with his agility had a shot at becoming a decent offensive lineman.

Largely home-grown and unheralded coming out of high school. Yes, the Huskers will be fine up front this season.

Tenopir turns and looks over at a board in his office. Out loud, he counts up the totals. For spring practice, he says, the Huskers are going to have 22 offensive linemen, 10 on scholarship and 12 walk-ons. "People hammer us in recruiting with numbers," he says. "But we will evaluate and encourage any big kid who has decent balance and mobility, but who might not be what you're looking for in a scholarship player, to come here and walk on."

The "numbers knock" works this way: Go to Nebraska, prospects are told by other schools, and it will be at least three years before you play, if at all; they have so many offensive linemen on the depth chart, you'll have to fight your way up.

All this has contributed to Nebraska's reliance on Nebraska-grown players to play on the line. "Some of that is by choice," Tenopir says, "and some of that is because of the trouble we have getting kids from out of state. They've been told we have 18 or 20 guys there, but in the long run that's an advantage for us because of the way we can practice."

"We're honest with kids about all this. We say, 'Hey, we have numbers, this guy's going to be a great player,' and we go down the line. But we'll also say, 'With your ability, you have the opportunity to be better than this guy and this guy and this guy.'"

In spring practice, Tenopir tries to run

three and even four full units, giving all the linemen equal reps and chances. "You got five of them, they all think they should be the starter," he says. "With linemen, you put them up against a Christian Peter, and if they can't handle it there, they're not going to play, they know their role. They know they have to bide their time until they can handle it, if they ever can."

"And know what? I've had kids who come in here, help us in practice, get better, get stronger and play three or four snaps, and that was their dream—to play in Memorial Stadium."

And then there are the success stories,



Chris Dishman, whom the Huskers unearthed in Cozad, Neb., is a typical Nebraska offensive lineman in that he is long on desire and spends considerable time and energy in the team's vast weight room.

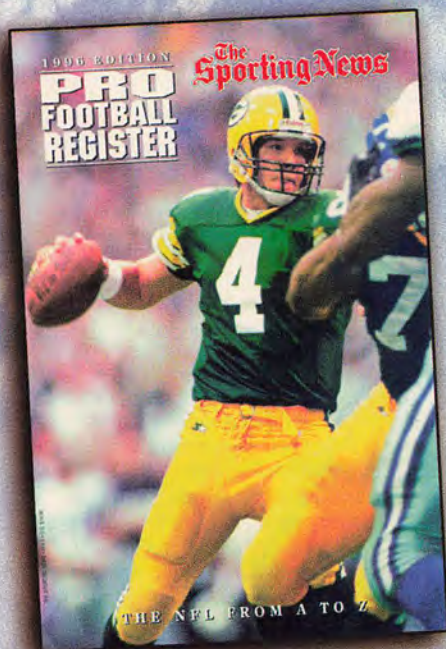
Zatechka and Treu got considerable playing time last season.

Anderson, Treu and Zatechka are from Lincoln. Dishman is from that green-ink dot in western Nebraska, and Taylor is from Wichita Falls, Texas. Of the five, only Anderson was considered a blue-chip recruit, a rarity for both a Lincoln high school product and a Nebraska offensive lineman. Treu was a walk-on who was promised a scholarship down the line when he was recruited. The Huskers went after him only after watching him play center for Lincoln's Pius X High School in the state small-school basketball tournament. Huskers coaches de-

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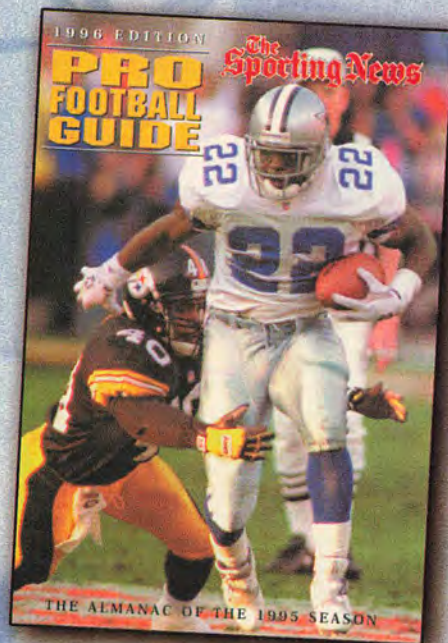
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From **The Sporting News**
L I B R A R Y

the players who work their way up to the starting unit. Three of them who had done that by last season will be back this fall, if not necessarily at the same positions.

The '96 center

Aaron Taylor, the son of an Air Force officer, spent most of his youth in Europe before moving to Wichita Falls in time for his freshman year of high school. He weighed 230 pounds and had played a lot of football—European football, which most of us call soccer.

"I dived right into (American) football," Taylor says. "At the first practice, we got our equipment and had to put our pads in our pants. I didn't have a clue. None. I was watching everyone, and even then I had my pads in upside down the first day."

Taylor is listed at 6-1, and that's stretching it. But that's one of the reasons he's at Nebraska. By the time Taylor was a productive high school upperclassman, it was obvious he wasn't going to end up football tall. As such, he was being recruited—and mildly at that—by all the powerhouses: New Mexico State, Texas Tech, Oklahoma State. And Nebraska. That's it.

"Milt Tenopir sat right up there in that office and said, 'It's not a matter of how tall you are; it's a matter of how big your heart is,'" Taylor says. "That's what I wanted to hear."

By last fall, his third season on campus, Taylor was starting at left guard, at a squat but strong 305 pounds. Strong. That's the key. For all of them.

It is a weekday in February, close enough to the Fiesta Bowl that there probably are a few hangovers still lingering in Lincoln, but far enough removed to have the attention redirected to upcoming spring practice and the '96 season. All the coaches can do at this time of year is work in conditioning drills with the players in the afternoon, in the Huskers' indoor facility. Under NCAA rules, footballs are taboo. Before and after that workout, though, comes the heavy work.

The Nebraska weight room is huge—no, make that enormous. About 30,000 square feet enormous, making it the largest facility of its kind on any college campus in the country. To some opposing coaches, it's a little garish. When Oregon State visited Lincoln in 1989, the Beavers' coach at the time, Dave Kragthorpe (who also was his school's A.D.), blanched at what he saw. He said an unfortunate precedent in college football recruiting was that bigger was better, and while he could build a functional weight room for a major program at a fraction of the cost, he knew that might not pass muster with many big-time recruits.

It's easy to forget that 25 years ago, when Nebraska was winning its first national title, weight training meant a few barbells and dumbbells and maybe a machine or two. Then, as former Nebraska pole vaulter Boyd Epley took control of the school's strength-training program, the Huskers' weight room became the envy of America in the 1980s. Yet as the '90s approached, it was deemed insufficient.

In 1989, the school expanded the weight room to its current size, making it big enough

to handle the entire football team at once. Although athletes in other sports and even cheerleaders use the facility, they are outnumbered—and easily outlifted—by football players. At the start of each workout, each football player checks a list on the wall, then heads to a drawer to get his little cup of the supplement Creatine in his numbered slot. Depending on a player's size, he is expected to take five or 10 grams of the white powder, both before and after the workout. "It's a food, not a drug," Epley says of Creatine. "It's kind of like a steak ground up into a powder. It's a pain in the neck to distribute,

but it makes a difference in the power of the football team." Nebraska isn't the only school whose athletes use Creatine; in some ways, Epley says, the Cornhuskers are behind the times. It just seems Nebraska's players are bigger and stronger than those at other schools.

Epley and his staff of seven full-time strength coaches, called the Performance Team, supervise the workouts. "We tear the team down into eight groups, and we have eight supervisors in charge of 14 or 15 people," Epley says. "They generate cards, with each player's workout on it each day."

Nothing done at Nebraska is radically different than what is done at most other major college programs. The Cornhuskers just do it better than anyone else. The size of the weight room, the Performance Team and the regimen the players follow are important, but most schools have part-time nutritionists or full-time university nutritionists who devote part of their attention to the sports teams. Nebraska has a full-time athletic department performance nutritionist and even a full-time psychologist.

Epley is the boss, his official title being assistant athletic director of athletic performance. On a laptop computer in his office overlooking the weight-room floor, he shows a visitor a play on which Wiegert pulls and explodes into some poor defensive guy, knocking him back about 17 yards and a couple of inches into the artificial turf. Epley plays it over and over, explaining that everything done in the weight room and in the conditioning program is based on this moment. Explosion. Quick bursts. Drive up through the leg.

The weightlifting program, he emphasizes, isn't about just adding weight to the body and piling on more plates. It's about that burst, and that's especially true for offensive linemen.

"Think about what an offensive lineman does," Epley says amid the clang of



Dishman, a menacing 310-pounder, will have to learn the nuances of a new position this fall as he makes the transition from tackle to guard.

weights on this particular day. "Their feet are always on the ground, so when they apply force into the ground, it allows them to go in the opposite direction. So you need to have ground-based activities where your feet are on the ground when you train."

"For some reason, there are still a lot of people in strength-training roles who think you have to sit on a machine to train. If you sit down and do leg extensions and things like that, that's one muscle at a time. If you do a snatch, or squats and cleans, your whole body is working at once."

As we talk, Dishman is straining in quick bursts (with feet on the ground) with a group of his fellow offensive linemen. You almost get the impression that Taylor's dry wit and Anderson's almost professorial demeanor are the counterbalances—and help keep Dishman in line. But during the weightlifting, Dishman is damn serious.

The '96 guard

Dishman's parents both worked in Cozad's Monroe Auto plant. Chris was big all along, but he didn't get heavily into football until his sophomore year in high school. "I got in with the wrong crowd when I was young and didn't want to do sports," he says. "I came out of it, though."

Dishman talked with Colorado State, Iowa State and Kansas State, but that's as far as it got. He didn't take another visit, coming to Lincoln in 1992 grateful for the scholarship and not expecting ever to start. "I was pretty much in awe my whole first year," he says. "At first, you realize there's no way in heck I'm ever going to beat these guys out, guys like Zach Wiegert and Will Shields. Then you blink and the time has passed and, man, it's your turn."

In the indoor practice facility, as the Huskers go through short-burst agility drills by the dozen, Epley talks about how some programs are still doing it all wrong.

"Did you play football?" he asks.

"Yes."

"You ever run a mile and a half or two miles?"

"Yes."

"Wrong! Distance running has nothing to do with the sport of football! In this country, there are football coaches who have their players running distances because they think they're going to get them in shape for the fourth quarter. That is training in the wrong energy system!"

Again, in football, the bread and butter is the short burst. Explode. Five seconds for a play, then 40 seconds of rest. It's folly, Epley says, to train any other way. "The type of training should be short bursts, followed by a rest interval of 40 to 50 seconds," he says. "You go hard, recover and go hard again. That's what happens on the football field. The athletes you see here have basically zero aerobic conditioning in their programs. That will raise some eyebrows from people who read that, but that's what power sports are all about."

What would Epley do if he spotted, say, Anderson on a LifeCycle? "We would probably want to know what's going on," he says, "because research indicates that if you do aerobic conditioning over a period of time, you actually convert your explosive fast-twitch muscle fibers into slow-twitch muscle fibers. Fast-twitch muscle fibers generate four times as much force as slow-twitch muscles."

Oh. Of course.

Repeatedly, the long line of offensive linemen go through their quick drills, then their 40 seconds of rest. Anderson, with a 3 o'clock shadow, has sweat through the gray T-shirt, but his feet are remarkably quick for a man his size. They remain quick in drill after drill, just as they do in the fourth quarter.

The '96 tackle

Was there ever any doubt where Anderson would go to college? He was a big-time prospect who considered Stanford, Washington and Michigan. But he is from Lincoln.

But it wasn't a case of Anderson hanging out at Memorial Stadium as a youngster. He never attended a Nebraska game until he was being recruited. Couldn't get tickets. But after he went across town for his official visit, he decided there was no reason to visit other schools.

Anderson redshirted and waited, backed up Wiegert as a freshman, then took over the starting job as a sophomore last season. Big Eight coaches voted him to the all-league team, and he became the quiet, scholarly leader of a line that quieted any doubts early on about whether it would be good enough for the Huskers to win a second consecutive national title.

"We took a lot of pride in the fact that we were supposedly the weak link last season, and we came through," Anderson says. "We wanted to prove we could go out and play the same level as that '94 group, or even exceed it. I don't know if we exceeded them—that would have been tough—but I think we played as well as they did."

Florida probably would agree. ♦

Terry Frei is a sportswriter with the Denver Post.

Revisiting the steroid issue

Like many football programs, college and pro, Nebraska had a steroid problem in the late 1970s and '80s. Until the effects the drug had on the body became documented and better-known, steroids were a fashionable shortcut, quasi-respectable in the sense that exceeding the speed limit is OK ... if you aren't caught.

No question, the almost spiritual zeal and emphasis on strength training put pressure on football players everywhere to bulk up fast. Pick a major program, any major program, and that was true. And the drug's effects were obvious. Mood swings. Acne. The thick neck. Sculpted features, and sculpted awful fast. Those aren't automatic indicators of steroid use, but they were evident in many football players, especially linemen. Their coaches either looked the other way, didn't want to know or simply were stupid.

Nowhere was the pressure to get stronger faster more great than at Nebraska. Nor were the rewards more evident, since great weightlifting achievements were one way to get attention from the staff. One platform in the weight room was reserved for players who crossed certain thresholds in certain exercises.

Dean Steinkuhler, an All-American guard and the No. 2 pick in the 1984 draft, said he and several teammates used steroids at Nebraska. But he also said it hadn't been at the behest of anyone in the program.

Were members of the Cornhuskers' football/strength program naive about the steroid use going on around them? Perhaps. Indirectly responsible by saying: Get strong, guys, or you don't play? Or for not being zealous about checking how those strength gains were achieved? Could be. Or did the Nebraska coaches simply adopt a don't-ask, don't-tell policy, whether they admitted it or not? Only the men involved know how much they were involved in the documented steroid abuse at Nebraska before they took steps to try to stop it. Which, it must be pointed out, was before other programs followed suit.

But this much is clear: Amid all the investigating and the cynicism about how those Nebraska players got so big, nobody ever advanced evidence that strength coach Boyd Epley or anyone in the Nebraska hierarchy had direct knowledge of steroid use—or, worse, had helped promote it.

"Back when steroids were pretty prominent 15 years ago," offensive line coach Milt Tenopir says, "kids were getting strong fast. I guess the thing we can stress now is, how strong do you have to be to get the job done? You don't have to be a 500-pound bench-presser or a 650-pound squat guy. We don't put the stress on the numbers like that. And you still have to be able to perform football skills. I've always been against steroids as a false accomplishment. I think the big thing has been education."

It's easy to tell Epley has been asked about steroid use before, and he is unfazed. "In the '70s, it was a problem," he says. "We had some players who had symptoms of steroid use back then, and I pointed that out to Coach (Tom) Osborne. He had us institute steroid testing the next year, and the rest of the Big Eight followed. We told the players we were going to test and not one of them tested positive. Well, then we learned a lot about it, that it isn't necessary to tell them when you're going to test. So we started testing them randomly."

"I have said before, and I will say again, that if myself or anyone on my staff was ever found to recommend steroids to one of our athletes, I would resign immediately. You don't really need steroids. It's not a long-term solution. If you want to gain weight and get stronger, it takes years. You can get the job done. It just takes a little more time to do it the right way."

Epley says that when the NFL began testing for steroid use in 1990, it helped to slow steroid abuse in college football. He argues that steroid testing should be mandatory before a player can accept a scholarship.

The mere mention of steroids evokes an almost giddy laughter from Nebraska's current offensive linemen. "Yeah, look at these jugs," guard Chris Dishman says, meaning he doesn't feel particularly sculpted. Tackle Eric Anderson says steroids aren't a problem at Nebraska, "at least not that I've seen."

Not among this group, at least. ♦

—TERRY FREI



Line coach Milt Tenopir always has viewed steroid use "as a false accomplishment."

Northwestern's Barnett puts making a difference ahead of making money

BY KEVIN DING

It's 1992. Gary Barnett is at his first Northwestern post-season banquet. He is at the microphone, telling the crowd what an enjoyable day at home he had after his Wildcats beat Wisconsin, 27-25, on the final Saturday of the season.

After the triumph, which gave Northwestern its first three-victory Big Ten season since 1973, Barnett heads home and is as happy as can be. He walks on air all day and night before finally forcing himself to bed. There he lies, awake, still reveling in the victory, still awed that his rookie coaching season has ended on such a harmonious note. He may be more excited than when the game ended.

And so he turns to his wife, Mary—who is trying to fall asleep—and breaks the silence.

"Do you know," he asks her, "how many really great football coaches—I mean *really great* football coaches—there are in the world?"

After a long, dramatic pause, Mary answers her wide-eyed husband: "One fewer than you think there are."

The crowd roars.

Later, Barnett admits the story isn't exactly true on all counts. "Well, I did go home and relax — that part was true."

There's a lot of charisma and comedian in Barnett, but the thrust of that story—becoming one of football's really great coaches—is especially apropos now. After last season, Barnett could have left Northwestern and pursued that very ideal. Georgia inquired and UCLA offered. Each

gig was higher in profile than the Northwestern job, and it would have been easier to be a consistent winner in Athens, Ga., and Los Angeles than in Evanston, Ill. But Barnett chose to stay.

He says he did so because his work at Northwestern is much more to him than a means to collecting coach-of-the-year trophies or lucrative offers from other schools. He says he has something more important, and more fulfilling, than status or money.

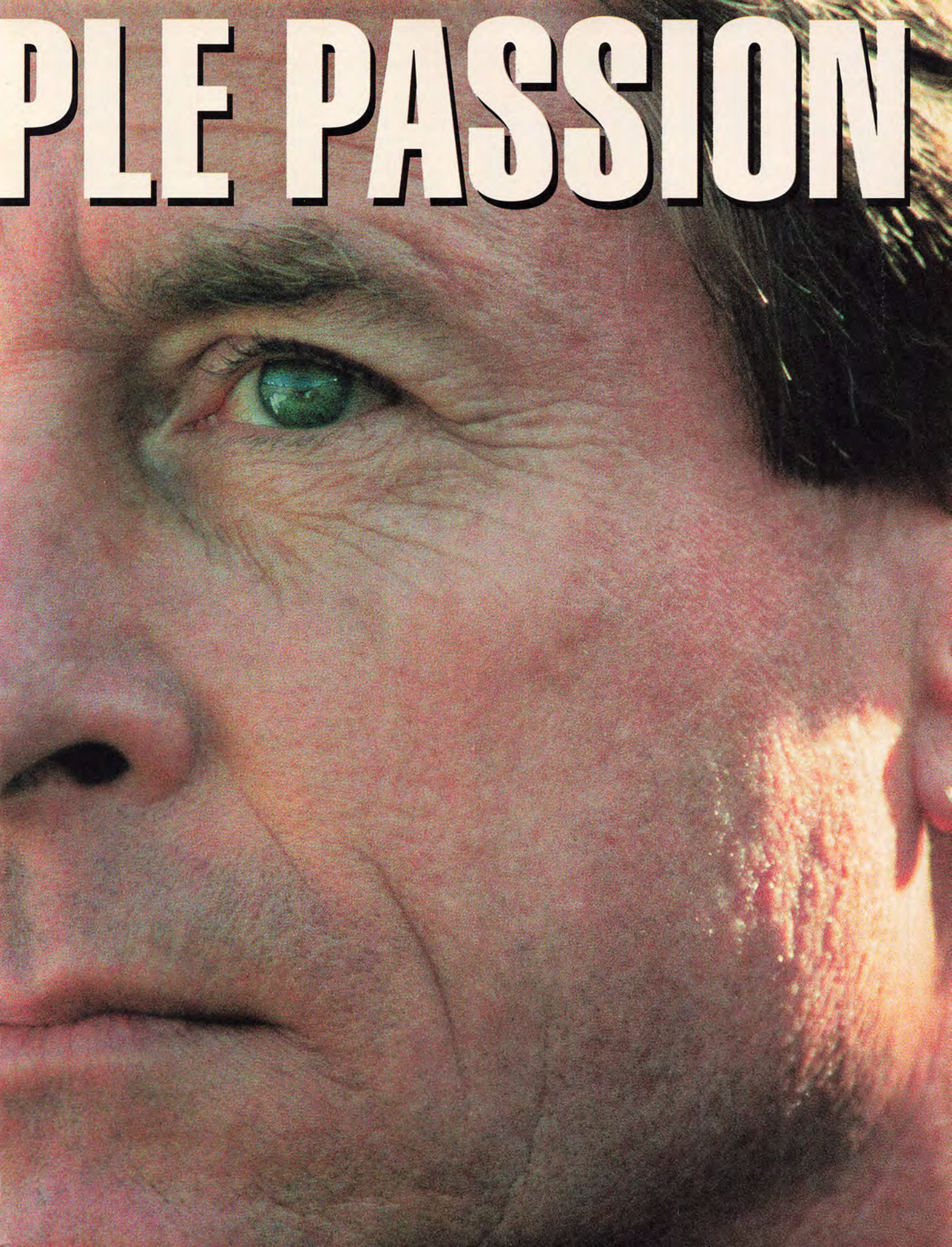


Gary Barnett would rather inspire the long-downtrodden Wildcats than seek additional fame and fortune elsewhere.

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PUR

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PLE PASSION



"I don't think I could have made a difference at UCLA; I think I have a chance at making a difference at Northwestern," Barnett says. "You only get a couple of chances in your life to make a difference, and those are the meaningful things that you do. No matter what you do in your 40 years of working, you'll have a sense of when those times come along—and there are just a few of them—that are difference-makers. Not difference-makers in you, but things where you can make a difference in others' lives."

"I don't think I could do that at UCLA. I was just the next guy to coach UCLA. I'm in their locker. At Northwestern, it's not that way. I have a chance to effect change. And I don't think the total change has occurred. It's sort of like we have this thing right here, and if I would've left—not because of me, necessarily, but I just didn't want to see this go back downhill. I want to see it go over the hill. That's what I set out to do. That's the difference I can make."

After 24 years without a winning season, 47 without a bowl appearance, 59 without a Big Ten title, here is a perfect Big Ten season and a trip to the Rose Bowl. The coach, who had no Division I head-coaching experience before getting the job, is showered with 17 coach-of-the-year awards. Once mistaken for Donald Trump while in New York, Barnett is Jay Leno's guest on *The Tonight Show* while in Los Angeles.

On campus, the team goes from being denied access to the school's all-purpose sports facility to having students jam the place to watch players run sprints. Classmates who once turned up their noses at free admission to games are told to pay—and do so willingly, later helping to disable the university phone system in a crushing push for Rose Bowl tickets.

In nearby Chicago, where the city's blue-collar sports fans always had ignored or scorned this smarty-pants team of losers, Michael Jordan declares Northwestern football is bigger than Jordan and the Bulls. Six-hundred lights on the John Hancock Center downtown are changed from Christmas red and green to Northwestern purple. The coach, who throws out the first pitch at Wrigley Field on Opening Day, tries to tip a baggage handler at O'Hare Airport but is told, "Coach, I could never take money from you."

Nationally, the football program that was one of the most mocked in all of sport since "The Streak"—a Division I-A-record 34 consecutive losses from 1979-82—gets its helmets plastered on Wheaties boxes. The team is commended in resolutions passed by Congress.

The capper: A year ago, the team's coach had to order his players not to read this or any other preseason college football magazine because none gave Northwestern respect. This year . . . well, things are different.

All of this may be hard to believe, but because someone at Northwestern invented the lie detector back when the school was known for more than just football, there is no doubting the aforementioned facts.

What Northwestern has done is astounding. But that may have been the easy part.

Barry Alvarez rebuilt doormat Wisconsin and won the Big Ten in 1993 before falling off to 7-4-1 the next year. Last season, he lost to Northwestern, 35-0, and didn't make a bowl game. The 1996 Wildcats not only must stay hungry after feasting in 1995, but also won't sneak up on anyone anymore. Last year's Northwestern team succeeded as much on chemistry as on ability, and this year's team will have to recapture some of that magic to keep the revolution going.

"Sustaining our status will definitely be harder," Northwestern running back Darnell Autry says. "Now everybody knows what we've got, and everybody is going to be preparing for us and gunning for us."

There never will be another year like 1995. That's what many naysayers argue with regard to Northwestern's 10-2 record and Rose Bowl berth. But even Northwestern's most diehard supporters know that regardless of NU's future performances, the enchantment of such a storybook season never will be matched.

Northwestern's 1996 team must overcome that fixation with last year's glory. Barnett already has.

"I don't want it to be the same," says Barnett, who turned 50 in

Gary Barnett had wide receiver D'Wayne Bates and his teammates reaching for the stars in '95, but the coach isn't about to bask in the glory of last season.

May. "That's what life is like—constant change. It's like when your car breaks down on the interstate, and all those cars are going by you and you're going, 'Golly, why do their cars have to go on?' Because that's the way it is—it goes on. When someone dies in your family, God, you feel terrible, but you look outside and life goes on. Everything else goes on."

"The Rose Bowl year was a memorable occasion in a lot of our lives, but there are other things to do now. I can't bask in that glory. It's not like I can put myself in a bubble, a Rose Bowl bubble, and just say, 'Here I am, here's my life ... the Rose Bowl and 1995!'"

Northwestern might not want to clone last season anyway. The Wildcats lost the Rose Bowl, 41-32, to USC. And Northwestern is a team with plenty of experience with using losing as motivation—first the years of defeat (including a pre-1995 record under Barnett of 8-24-1) and then the 30-28 home loss to Miami (Ohio) the week after starting '95 by winning at Notre Dame. Barnett called the Miami loss—in which Northwestern yielded 23 unanswered fourth-quarter points—"traumatic," but it motivated his team the rest of the year. Now the Rose Bowl loss looms large.

"If we had won that Rose Bowl, I don't think there's any way we could get back there this year," Barnett says. "Now we have a fighting chance. What hurt Alvarez as much as anything is that he did win the Rose Bowl. Once you get it all, it's a lot harder to get back for it, I think."

The players are brooding over the Rose Bowl loss even more than Barnett. Linebacker Pat Fitzgerald, who was showered with many postseason honors, didn't get to play in the Rose Bowl after breaking his leg late in the season. He may joke about it—"It has taught me patience, something my mom always said I needed anyway"—but the memory of watching from the sidelines in Pasadena still smarts.

"As a little kid growing up in Chicago, you always want to play in the Rose Bowl," Fitzgerald says. "I had a chance last year, but I didn't get the opportunity to take advantage of it. We'd like to go back there and finish the job we didn't get done."

Quarterback Steve Schnur's fourth-quarter interception led to USC's clinching touchdown, and the free-smiling Schnur frowns at the memory. He admits it has haunted him: "If I could, it would probably be the one thing I would go back and change in my life."

When ABC wanted to broadcast the Wildcats' late-season home game against Penn State and pushed the start time back to 2:30 p.m., Northwestern—unaccustomed to the spotlight—had to scramble and set up temporary lights to illuminate the field. The lights worked so poorly that by the fourth quarter, the game took on the backyard feel of boys playing past dusk.

That atmosphere was appropriate for this most original event—a 21-10 Northwestern victory accomplished not just on national television, but in front of a standing-room-only crowd roaring for the 'Cats. Northwestern's 49,256-seat Dyche Stadium usually has been about 15,000 shy of capacity in recent years, without a sellout between 1983-1995. About half the fans who showed up for games were road-trippers rooting for the visiting Big Ten team.

So, especially after Northwestern's biggest 1995 triumphs (Notre Dame and Michigan) had come on the road, beating Penn State at home made for the most special day of the year.

"That was the first time we had a great collegiate sports atmosphere," Northwestern athletic director Rick Taylor says. "The place was filled with purple, it was a loud crowd, and maybe the way the game was finished at night had something to do with it. That was the highlight."

But suddenly overflowing crowd support is just one of many tangible reasons Northwestern can expect success in 1996.

Foremost among those reasons is personnel: 14 of 24 starters return; more important, 41 of 54 lettermen are back. Autry is back for his junior year. He tied or broke 25 Northwestern records last season, rushing for 1,675 yards on 355 carries and fumbling just once. Schnur is back at quarterback, along with big-play receiver D'Wayne Bates, who had seven catches for 145 yards in the Rose Bowl. Add wide receiver Brian Musso and tight end Darren Drexler, and the Wildcats will throw the ball more than they did a year ago. The nation's top scoring defense returns mostly intact, led by Fitzgerald at middle linebacker. He reached double figures in tackles all 10 times he played last season.

Northwestern also returns all 10 coaches for the fourth year in a

row, all original members of Barnett's staff except secondary coach Jerry Brown, who arrived one year in. It's worth noting that Wisconsin lost four assistants—including Iowa State coach Dan McCarthy—then went out and struggled to a 4-5-2 mark last year.

Barnett leans heavily on his assistants, rarely even wearing a headset on the sideline. Barnett organizes, delegates and motivates. And everyone he leads to battle in 1996 goes in with increased confidence.

"We used to ask the guys to visualize the Rose Bowl," Barnett says. "We'd had a couple guys who'd driven by it, but we sure didn't have anybody who'd ever played in it. A lot of our guys thought they could do it, but these guys know that they have done it."

It also happens that 1996 is the year Northwestern's schedule gets significantly softer. After facing the likes of Notre Dame, Stanford, Boston College and Air Force in nonconference play in recent years, the Wildcats start with Wake Forest (1-10 last season), Duke (3-8) and Ohio University (2-8-1). Indiana, winless in Big Ten play last year, is NU's first league foe, meaning Northwestern could be 4-0 before hosting Michigan on October 5.

If anyone is going to be squinting into Northwestern's future, though, they must focus on recruiting—every program's lifeline. Northwestern's whirlwind 1995 season came too late to sway most of last year's top high school seniors, who already had established their preferred schools before Northwestern emerged. But expect this year's seniors to give NU plenty of thought.

"Darnell Autry's a household name now. Pat Fitzgerald's a household name now. I'm a household name now," Barnett says. "I can't go into a recruit's home without signing an autograph and taking a picture. Before, they had to look me up in the media guide and say, 'Who's that guy again?'"

Barnett was hired primarily because he was such a zealous recruiter, a major change from previous Northwestern coaches. Bill McCartney brought Barnett aboard at Colorado in 1984 because of his recruiting ability, and upon arrival at Northwestern eight years later, Barnett attacked anew.

He sent out purple envelopes, rather than white ones. He sent out handwritten letters from assistants, rather than form letters. He had NU students sign petitions to be sent to top prospects, showing them how much Northwestern wanted them. He even enlisted local first-graders to write little letters on Northwestern's behalf.

Through all that, Barnett landed some prep stars like Autry, who was wooed by UCLA, Colorado and Arizona State, but the strange thing is that Northwestern rose without the help of its most prized catches. Wide receiver Eric Scott didn't fit in and transferred to UCLA. Running back Robbie Glanton, who transferred to Arizona State, and offensive lineman Adam Reed, who left for Colorado, probably would've been three-year starters had they stayed. And just before the '95 season, sophomore quarterback Lloyd Abramson—who had picked NU over Illinois, Penn State and Miami and was the Wildcats' highest-profile recruit ever—dropped out of the race with Schnur for the starting job and left school.

Northwestern got to the Rose Bowl without the blue-chippers. What could happen if the Wildcats—who (they hope) replaced Abramson in February by signing 6-5, 205-pound Corbett Elsen, a prep All-American from East Grand Rapids' unbeaten Michigan state champions—step up and start getting their share?

"We'll chase the same guys we chased a year ago, but what'll happen now is they're going to listen to us a little bit longer and maybe a little harder . . . and maybe we're going to get those guys," Barnett says. "In February, we signed 16 guys but offered 90 scholarships, meaning 74 guys went another way. USC offered 29 and got 22. That's pretty good, and that's what we want. If we can play well and validate some of the early decisions by kids to put us in their top five, we can really reap the benefits of the Rose Bowl in our next recruiting class."

Of course, this doesn't mean Northwestern can offer admission to all the nation's prep stars; the university's academic requirements will remain stringent. When the Wildcats broke into the national polls last year, some talk broke out that Northwestern must have lowered its requirements to land better athletes. Barnett was quick to point out that 24 of the 27 full- or part-time starters who would take the field with him that Saturday had received academic honors either in high school or college. Last year's Wildcats had an average SAT score of 1,037, second only to Stanford among Division I-A football teams.

"You've got to keep this whole thing in perspective," Barnett says. "We haven't cured cancer, we haven't saved a life. We haven't

done anything that is any more important than just representing our university at a level of excellence, like many other aspects of the university already do. We just sort of carried our weight—that's the way I look at it."

The Wildcats also will remain respectful and well-behaved on the field, playing the way that led so many people—including many non-football fans—to inundate Barnett with complimentary mail. But will the people out there get a headache this season from a second dose of Northwestern's sweetness?

"Hopefully, things will be the same way," Schnur says. "I hope people look at us as a school that mixes academics and athletics and proves that it can still be done in the 1990s."

What does Gary Barnett want now? "I want to go back to the Rose Bowl and win it. I want to put the kind of team on the field that we did last year that represented all the things most of us appreciate about college athletics. I want a great college football program, an exemplary college football program."

But can Northwestern go from laughingstock to powerhouse in just two years? The laughingstock's stock soared in 1995, but the market will be different in '96. Last year's team broke through by winning games it *wasn't* supposed to win; now this year's team must break through again by winning games it *is* supposed to win. Trying to win in the face of higher expectations and fired-up opposition offers new burdens and pressures.

"What a coach is more concerned about than anything else is the team handling situations they're not prepared to handle, that they haven't had experience handling," Barnett says. "Last year's team handled so many of those, it was really remarkable."

And even Northwestern's savior isn't exactly sure how to proceed from here.

"Do things need to change? Yeah," Barnett says. "There are lots of things we can do to make our program better. I'm not exactly sure what they are right now, but when I hear them and see them, I'll know what they are and I'll implement them."

He is being pushed onto yet another plot of unsettled land, but Barnett remains confident. His words say it, and his steel-gray eyes show it. He expects a challenge, but he doesn't buy the argument that his toughest task lies ahead. What could be harder than breathing life into something dead for most of the past century, he asks?

"When you can only turn over 20 percent of your team each year because of recruiting restrictions, it's pretty hard to go from absolutely no tradition to the Rose Bowl. That's pretty dang hard," Barnett says. "I'll tell you what—you be the coach. Which team do you want to inherit—the team that we just took to the Rose Bowl and go back at 'em next year, or the team from 1992 and try to get *them* to the Rose Bowl?"

Now more than ever, Barnett is applying the original motto he brought to Northwestern: "Expect Victory." He is college football's king of the catch-phrase, having ridden "Belief Without Evidence" a long way last season and having spouted more than his share of fortune-cookie wisdom (i.e. "You've got to dig big ditches before you can build big buildings," or "Our tradition's ahead of us at Northwestern; everyone else's is behind them").

But Barnett has immortalized one slogan above all others. On January 11, 1992—just a few weeks into his new job—Barnett strolled out at halftime of an Ohio State-Northwestern basketball game and promised Wildcats fans that he would take "the Purple to Pasadena."

Over the winter, Barnett appeared at another home basketball game. And, sure enough, he did it again. Barnett promised to take Northwestern back. Apparently, he doesn't know when to quit.

"No, I do," he says. "But it's not now."

Kevin Ding is a sportswriter for the Miami Herald.

He made us believe

By SAM VALENZISI

How did Northwestern do it? A better question might be how did Gary Barnett do it?

As a kicker for the 1995 Wildcats, I am asked time and again to explain Northwestern's success—and the impact Coach Barnett had on our emergence.

Barnett became a fixture in newspapers, magazines and evening news highlights throughout the country last season as we won 10 of 11 regular-season games, took the Big Ten Conference title and played in the Rose Bowl. Along the way, everyone outside the cozy confines of the Wildcat football team learned exactly what players and assistants already knew about Coach Barnett: His charisma and confidence are contagious, so much so that you find his metaphors and philosophy invading your everyday life.

For naysayers who wrongly believe Northwestern lowered its standards or cut corners to reach the upper echelon of college football, I have a ready response: "Hey, winning is an attitude." That's just one of many Barnett-isms I carry over to the classroom and my job-search efforts.

From Day One, Coach Barnett asked us to be accountable to one another and to believe in him and the other coaches as much as they believed in us. He said that when we fully trusted each other, we'd begin to succeed.

For me, that moment occurred in the 1994 season, on a cold and rainy November afternoon in Evanston, Ill. In the previous two seasons, missed field goals had cost us dearly against Michigan State, and now we were locked in another slugfest with the Spartans. After a 6-for-6 start on field goals in '94, I had lapsed into inconsistency—and, wouldn't you know it, I missed a wind-aided, 47-yard attempt in the first half against Michigan State. Down 21-14 midway through the third quarter, we were in position to attempt a long field goal. But, considering my slump, would Coach Barnett call on me again? Would he *trust* me again? Coach called me over. He asked if I thought I could make the kick, which would be a 51-yarder into a gusting wind. Without hesitation, I answered: "I'll make it." He replied: "Let's kick it."

Never mind that the kick was a line drive, twisting in the wind and knuckling both to the left and the right as it headed toward the uprights. Never mind that it also cleared by 10 yards. And never mind that Michigan State pulled away to win the game. When Coach took my word, I had proof he believed in me, a walk-on who had kicked only one field goal in his high school career. He believed in me the way I believed in him—totally—and my confidence was sky-high from then on (as evidenced by my 15-for-16 accuracy on field goals in '95).

In my mind, what separates Gary Barnett from other coaches is that every day he proves to his players that he himself practices the very philosophies and motivational ideals that other coaches merely use as meeting-room rhetoric. The "Belief Without Evidence" motto that he coined for the 1995 season isn't just a motto; it's a statement of what Gary Barnett is about, and of what he wants each of his players to be.

When Coach Barnett spumed offers to leave Evanston for UCLA or Georgia, I truly believe that the deciding factor wasn't the money. Or the incentives. Or anything else those schools could provide.

When recruiting, Coach says he looks for leaders and risk-takers. He asks each player which he would value more—something store-bought or something built with the athlete's own two hands. The collective reply is, "What I had built myself." What keeps Gary Barnett at Northwestern is that he knows he has built something special with his players, and he is willing to take any risks inherent in the job. I think Coach Barnett believed in us, and he knew we believed in him. And nothing has changed.

Sam Valenzisi, a second-team selection on THE SPORTING NEWS 1995 All-America squad, is a June 1996 graduate of Northwestern's Medill School of Journalism.



Former Wildcats kicker Sam Valenzisi can pinpoint the day his coach's message really hit home.

Grading the nation's coaches

Bowden, Osborne, Paterno, Holtz, Spurrier are among those with spiffy report cards

THE SPORTING NEWS queried writers from around the country and asked them to rate the coaches in the conference each covers. The respondents were asked to rank the coaches in 10 categories, from top to bottom. The results by conference (with 1995 affiliations; includes coaches who were fired or resigned after season):

ACC

Best on game day: Bobby Bowden, Florida State.
Best game preparation: George Welsh, Virginia.
Best recruiter: Bowden.
Best motivator: Tommy West, Clemson.
Best teacher: Welsh.
Best at maximizing talent: Bowden.
Best at handling the media: Bowden.
Best at assembling a staff: Bowden.
Best in big games: Bowden.
Best overall: 1. Bowden; 2. Welsh; 3. George O'Leary, Georgia Tech.

BIG EAST

Best on game day: Frank Beamer, Virginia Tech.
Best game preparation: Beamer.
Best recruiter: Paul Pasqualoni, Syracuse.
Best motivator: Beamer.
Best teacher: Beamer.
Best at maximizing talent: Don Nehlen, West Virginia.
Best at handling the media: Ron Dickerson, Temple.
Best at assembling a staff: Nehlen.
Best in big games: Beamer.
Best overall: 1. Beamer; 2. Pasqualoni; 3. Nehlen.

BIG EIGHT

Best on game day: Tom Osborne, Nebraska.
Best game preparation: Osborne.
Best recruiter: Osborne.
Best motivator: Glen Mason, Kansas.
Best teacher: Bill Snyder, Kansas State.
Best at maximizing talent: Snyder.
Best at handling the media: Rick Neuheisel, Colorado.
Best at assembling a staff: Osborne.
Best in big games: Osborne.
Best overall: 1. Osborne; 2. Snyder; 3. Neuheisel.

BIG TEN

Best on game day: Joe Paterno, Penn State.
Best game preparation: Gary Barnett, Northwestern.
Best recruiter: John Cooper, Ohio State.
Best motivator: Barnett.
Best teacher: Paterno.
Best at maximizing talent: Barnett.
Best at handling the media: Barnett.
Best at assembling a staff: Paterno.
Best in big games: Paterno.

Best overall: 1. Paterno; 2. Barnett; 3. Barry Alvarez, Wisconsin.

BIG WEST

Best on game day: Chris Ault, Nevada.
Best game preparation: Ault.
Best recruiter: (tie) Ault and Nelson Stokley, SW Louisiana.
Best motivator: Ault.
Best teacher: Ault.
Best at maximizing talent: Ault.
Best at handling the media: John Ralston, San Jose State.
Best at assembling a staff: Ault.
Best in big games: Ault.
Best overall: 1. Ault; 2. Stokley; 3. John L. Smith, Utah State.

INDEPENDENTS

Best on game day: Lou Holtz, Notre Dame.
Best game preparation: Holtz.
Best recruiter: Holtz.
Best motivator: Holtz.
Best teacher: Holtz.
Best at maximizing talent: Steve Logan, East Carolina.
Best at handling the media: Holtz.
Best at assembling a staff: Holtz.
Best in big games: Holtz.
Best overall: 1. Holtz; 2. Logan; 3. Rick Minter, Cincinnati.

MID-AMERICAN

Best on game day: Gary Blackney, Bowling Green.
Best game preparation: Blackney.
Best recruiter: Gary Pinkel, Toledo.
Best motivator: Blackney.
Best teacher: Al Molde, Western Michigan.
Best at maximizing talent: (tie) Blackney and Dick Flynn, Central Michigan.
Best at handling the media: Blackney.
Best at assembling a staff: Molde.
Best in big games: Blackney.
Best overall: 1. Blackney; 2. Molde; 3. Randy Walker, Miami (Ohio).

PACIFIC-10

Best on game day: Mike Bellotti, Oregon.
Best game preparation: Bellotti.
Best recruiter: John Robinson, USC.
Best motivator: (tie) Mike Price,

Washington State, and Jim Lambright, Washington.

Best teacher: Bellotti.
Best at maximizing talent: Dick Tomey, Arizona.
Best at handling the media: Bellotti.
Best at assembling a staff: Tyrone Willingham, Stanford.
Best in big games: Terry Donahue, UCLA.
Best overall: 1. Robinson; 2. Tomey; 3. Donahue.

SOUTHEASTERN

Best on game day: Steve Spurrier, Florida.
Best game preparation: Spurrier.
Best recruiter: Phil Fulmer, Tennessee.
Best motivator: Terry Bowden, Auburn.
Best teacher: Spurrier.
Best at maximizing talent: Spurrier.
Best at handling the media: Bowden.
Best at assembling a staff: Bowden.
Best in big games: Bowden.
Best overall: 1. Spurrier; 2. Bowden; 3. Fulmer.

SOUTHWEST

Best on game day: R.C. Slocum, Texas A&M.
Best game preparation: Slocum.
Best recruiter: Slocum.
Best motivator: Slocum.
Best teacher: John Mackovic, Texas.
Best at maximizing talent: Spike Dykes, Texas Tech.
Best at handling the media: Dykes.
Best at assembling a staff: Slocum.
Best in big games: Mackovic.
Best overall: 1. Slocum; 2. Dykes; 3. Mackovic.

WESTERN ATHLETIC

Best on game day: Sonny Lubick, Colorado State.
Best game preparation: LaVell Edwards, BYU.
Best recruiter: Ron McBride, Utah.
Best motivator: McBride.
Best teacher: Fisher DeBerry, Air Force.
Best at maximizing talent: DeBerry.
Best at handling the media: Jim Sweeney, Fresno State.
Best at assembling a staff: Lubick.
Best in big games: Edwards.
Best overall: 1. McBride; 2. Lubick; 3. Edwards.

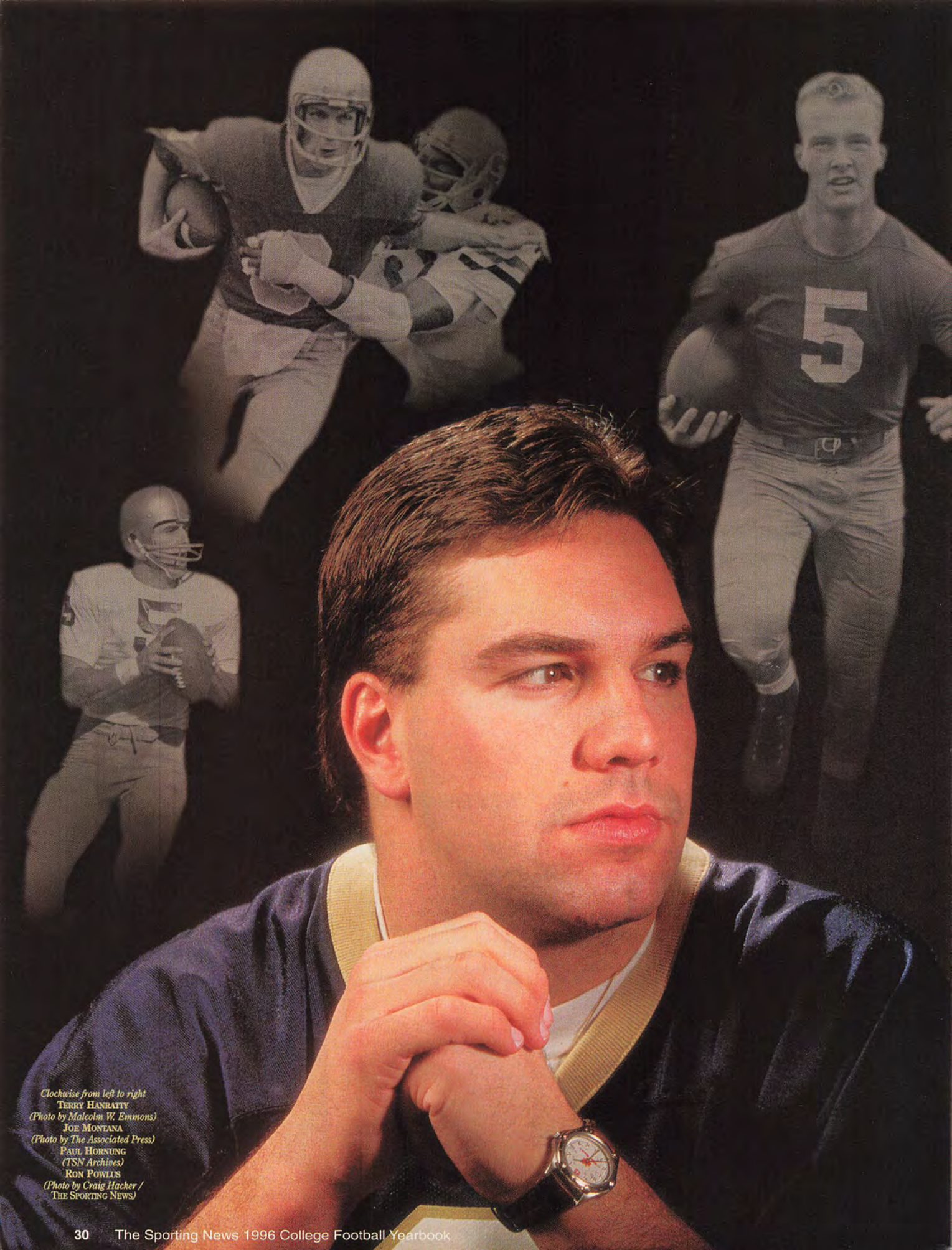


Florida's Spurrier gets high marks for, among other things, his abilities on game days.



Nebraska's Osborne was considered the best coach in the now-defunct Big Eight.

THE WRITERS: John Akers, San Jose (Calif.) Mercury News; Mark Anderson, Reno (Nev.) Gazette-Journal; Paul Arnett, Honolulu Star-Bulletin; Andy Bagnato, Chicago Tribune; Joe Baird, Salt Lake Tribune; Tony Barnhart, Atlanta Journal-Constitution; Mike Bires, Beaver County (Pa.) Times; John Block, Kalamazoo (Mich.) Gazette; Kirk Bohls, Austin (Texas) American-Statesman; Andy Boogaard, Fresno (Calif.) Bee; Greg Bortolin, Las Vegas Review-Journal; Rick Bozich, Louisville Courier-Journal; Michael Bradley, free-lance writer; B.G. Brooks, Rocky Mountain News (Denver); Bruce Brown, Lafayette (La.) Advertiser; Jimmy Burch, Fort Worth Star-Telegram; Jack Carle, Bowling Green (Ohio) Sentinel-Tribune; Greg Couch, Wichita (Kan.) Eagle; Dennis Dodd, free-lance writer; Tim Doherty, Hattiesburg (Miss.) American; Doug Doughty, Roanoke (Va.) Times and World News; Bob Dutton, Kansas City Star; Al Featherston, Durham (N.C.) Herald-Sun; Jonathan Feigen, Houston Chronicle; Ed Graney, San Diego Union-Tribune; Vahe Gregorian, St. Louis Post-Dispatch; Dave Hackenberg, Toledo (Ohio) Blade; Marc Hansen, Des Moines (Iowa) Register; Bob Harig, St. Petersburg (Fla.) Times; Chris Harry, Tampa Tribune; Ron Higgins, The (Memphis) Commercial Appeal; Bruce Hooley, Cleveland Plain Dealer; Jimmy Hyams, Knoxville (Tenn.) News-Sentinel; Bob Keisser, Long Beach (Calif.) Press-Telegram; Eddie Landreth, Winston-Salem (N.C.) Journal; Ron Maly, Des Moines (Iowa) Register; Phil Miller, Salt Lake Tribune; Mark Monteth, Indianapolis Star; Dave Moorman, Baton Rouge (La.) Morning Advocate; Bill Nichols, Dallas Morning News; Roland Queen, Akron (Ohio) Beacon Journal; David Ramsey, Syracuse (N.Y.) Herald-American; Steve Richardson, Dallas Morning News; Lenn Robbins, The Record (Bergen, N.J.); Kevin Scarbinsky, Birmingham (Ala.) News; Alan Schmadtke, Orlando Sentinel; John Seaburn, Akron (Ohio) Beacon Journal; Kevin Turbeville, Jonesboro (Ark.) Sun; Michael Vega, Boston Globe; Bud Withers, Seattle Post-Intelligencer; Doug Zaleski, Muncie (Ind.) Evening-Press; Len Ziehm, Chicago Sun-Times.



Clockwise from left to right
TERRY HANRATTY
(Photo by Malcolm W. Emmons)
JOE MONTANA
(Photo by The Associated Press)
PAUL HORNUNG
(TSN Archives)
RON POWLUS
(Photo by Craig Hacker /
THE SPORTING NEWS)

*Do visions of past Irish QBs dance in his head?
No, Ron Powlus is content with his own legacy*

Ghost Buster

BY MICHAEL BRADLEY

It seems as if the entire Notre Dame campus knows Ron Powlus has forgotten to return his 1996-97 housing form and has about 15 minutes to make the deadline or risk a senior year rooming with some pimply faced freshman from Peoria. When you're the Fighting Irish quarterback, even the mundane details of your life hold interest for others.

The secretaries in the Notre Dame football office laugh about Powlus' procrastination and implore him to get moving, but not before asking whether his girlfriend will be bringing some Wise potato chips—considered a delicacy in some parts of the country—on her next visit to South Bend. David Quist, a roommate whom Powlus collects while driving back to the cluttered, modest dormitory suite the two share with three others, preaches calm and relates war stories from his own buzzer-beating clerical adventures. "Just slip it under the door," Quist advises. "They'll never know what time it arrived." Even a campus security guard is laughing about the football players who have been dashing about trying to get their housing forms in on schedule. Ah, the college life.

Powlus is calm, though annoyed about forgetting the deadline. He gets the same way on the football field when he makes a mistake. "Coach (Lou) Holtz will ask me, 'What's wrong?'" Powlus says. "I'll say, 'Remember seven plays ago when I threw that bad pass . . .'"

Of course, filing a little paperwork under deadline is nothing compared to having millions of people examine your every move every time you buckle your chinstrap. Powlus' psyche definitely has acquired some armor during three years under center in South Bend. He makes a quick stop back at his room, somehow finds the form among the swirl of dirty laundry and heads down the homestretch. He parks his blue Ford Explorer in a tow-away zone, finally locates the right office and delivers the goods. Crisis averted. Powlus shakes his head. "I can't believe I almost forgot that," he says.

But he did remember. And he delivered. Sure, things got a little tight at the end, but Powlus didn't crack. He doesn't mind pressure, which is a good thing, since stress can be found in equal quantities with air at Notre Dame.

Especially for quarterbacks.

Ron Powlus chose Notre Dame because of the tension, and not just the self-imposed, wait-'til-the-last-minute stuff that every college student faces. He wanted the stress that causes ulcers and turns high school superstars into scout-teamers. Men don't become heroes in cocoons, and Fighting Irish quarterbacks don't become great away from the spotlight. Powlus wanted to play the most tradition-laden position in all of college football and take on everything that goes with it.

"Coming out (of high school), I wanted to be in the spotlight. I wanted to be part of something big," Powlus says. "I felt good about pressure. I felt like I could handle it, and I feel like I've handled it fairly well here.

"I enjoy it. I love it. I'm glad I'm here. I couldn't see myself in another uniform."

The upside is always much bigger under those circumstances. Those who can withstand the constant comparisons to the mythical performers who came before will be admitted to their circle. Those who can't . . . well, they join Rusty Lisch and Rick Slager on the scrap heap of unfulfilled potential. Not everybody can operate within those parameters, but Powlus can. To him, the ghosts are part of life, just like housing forms and mid-term exams. He doesn't walk around campus romanticizing about the great ones who preceded him or pull on his jersey No. 3 hoping he can prove himself worthy of that storied digit. Powlus is Notre Dame's quarterback. He passes. He hands off. He even runs the option. He tries to win. Pressure? Let somebody else worry about that.

"If you don't want pressure . . . if you don't want people to worry about you every second . . . if you don't want to win games . . . if you don't want to be in the top 15 . . . if you don't want to have a shot at the national championship every year, don't come here," Powlus says. "Otherwise, this is perfect."

Because he grew up in the north-central Pennsylvania town of Berwick and followed Penn State football as a youth, Powlus can't regurgitate the parade of Notre Dame passing icons and quote the litany of their accomplishments.

"Here, more than other places, you can see the tradition and hear about it more," Powlus says. "I know the names Huarte and Lujack and Hornung, and I know a little about them, but I don't have the Notre Dame background and history other people might. I know enough to feel the pressure, but I can't recite it."

Those who can know the men that preceded Powlus as Notre Dame quarterback comprise the most storied group to play one position at one school in all of college football history. Dorais. Stuhldreher. Bertelli. Lujack. Tripucka. Hornung. Huarte. Hanratty. Theismann. Clements. Montana. Rice. Mirer. Four Heisman Trophy winners have played the position. Eight ND quarterbacks have been first-round NFL draft picks, and 16 were All-Americans. Their feats constitute a healthy portion of college football's romantic past. Notre Dame quarterbacks haven't just won games and national championships. They've filled more storybooks than Aesop, Mother Goose and the Brothers Grimm combined.

"The pressure at Notre Dame to perform is tremendous, in part because of who went before you," says Joe Theismann, who played at ND from 1968-70. "You are assuming responsibility for a position that has an amazing tradition.

"It's like going into the Super Bowl for the first time. You can read all about it and people can tell you about it, but until you go through it, you have no idea what it's like."

Notre Dame's national media coverage contributes greatly to the pressure, but the school's fans are the true culprits in the "Cult of the Quarterback." It seems each can remember the thrilling accomplishments of those who played the position, and they expect each new passer to add another amazing story. They recall Joe Montana and the chicken soup in the 1979 Cotton Bowl. How Paul Hornung played against USC in '56 with two broken thumbs. And Tom Clements' third-down pass from his end zone to Robin Weber against Alabama that saved the 1973 national championship. They remember Gus Dorais to Knute Rockne against Army in 1913 and John Huarte to Jack Snow against everybody in 1964. Notre Dame quarterbacks are expected to do more than win. They must craft on-field epics that endure for generations.

"Quarterback at Notre Dame is the number one glamour position in college football," Hornung says. "And with that comes pressure. You don't realize how much until you get away from it."

Perhaps 10 years from now, Powlus will understand just how dif-

ficult his time at Notre Dame was. To this point, however, he has had no such epiphany. And maybe that's what has helped him handle the scrutiny so well. Johnny Lujack, who won the 1947 Heisman and quarterbacked the Irish to national titles in 1946 and '47, says he feels "more pressure over a five-foot putt for a dollar today than I ever did at Notre Dame." Perhaps life in the vortex affords one an ignorance of circumstances outside it.

"Everybody isn't Joe Montana, and there was only one Joe Theismann," says Kevin McDougal, who led the Fighting Irish to an 11-1 record in 1993 but may never have started if Powlus hadn't broken his collarbone in preseason drills. "You'll fail if you go out and try to be someone else."

Anna Ivanina, whom Powlus has dated since seventh grade, finds herself unable to breathe during particularly tense moments of Notre Dame home games. It is natural, then, that Powlus' low-key



After stepping into the college game's most glamorous and demanding job, Irish quarterback Ron Powlus knows all about pressure—even the defensive variety.

demeanor regarding his circumstances confounds her. Were she in Powlus' position, Ivanina surely would crack. Maybe we all expect Powlus to break down. That's why we probe and scrutinize him so much. Since he hasn't yet met the extraordinary expectations that accompanied his arrival at Notre Dame, Powlus should be throwing tantrums on the field or lashing out at reporters. He isn't. And when he is alone with his family or Ivanina, he won't fly into a rage or dissolve into tears. Losses still bring sadness and anger, but the bad moods don't last. There always is another game, another chance.

Hours after Navy linebacker Fernando Harris snapped Powlus' left humerus in two with a crunching sack in November, Powlus surveyed the situation around him in his St. Joseph's Medical Center room. Ivanina, Powlus' mother and his sister, Christine, were crying, while his father and brother-in-law, Joel, were stoic and dejected. Another unfulfilled season was over, and time was running out on joining that long list of heroes. But it was Powlus who ended the wake. "Lighten up," he told the mourners. "These things happen. I'll be OK." Though Powlus would have his dark moments in the next few weeks, especially after a 10-inch steel rod was inserted in the arm to facilitate healing, he already was



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preparing for the next game, the next challenge.

"His family and I wonder what goes on in his head," Ivanina says. "What does the pressure do to him? He deals with it amazingly, and it doesn't come out in anger or sadness. How can someone with all that pressure keep it inside and not burst?"

Powlus has his priorities straight. After home games, he joins Ivanina and his family in their motel, instead of joining in the campus revelry. He did the same thing when he was the top high school prospect in the nation. Before he could see his friends, he went home and told war stories. Joe Namath, he ain't. "He's shy, yet personable," Ivanina says. "He's polite and respectful. He'll talk with you, but he won't make best friends with you."

Powlus' best friend might just be himself, and not just because of some Narcissus complex. "He loves his own company," Ivanina says. That's why Powlus spends hours back home, preparing for



ALBERT DICKSON / THE SPORTING NEWS

High expectations and the glare of the spotlight really haven't fazed Ron Powlus, who felt he could handle the stressful moments right from the start.

his solo trips to Fishing Creek Township to chase trout. And he genuinely was excited about making a solo, nine-hour trip from South Bend to Berwick for spring break. People who can't handle the pressure don't want to be alone with the demons. They crave company. They need reinforcement. Powlus doesn't.

"This isn't a place for everyone," former Notre Dame tight end Pete Chryplewicz says. "You hear that a lot. The players who do come here have a little more confidence and belief or faith in themselves. But you need that, because you're coming here to compete against the best in the nation—on opposing teams and the players on your own team."

Powlus may be handling the pressure well, but there still is the matter of his legacy at Notre Dame. To this point, he has been a disappointment. Powlus missed his freshman year with a broken collarbone and has looked ordinary for much of the past two seasons—much like the Irish themselves. Powlus is 14-7-1 as a starter and has yet to put together a season worthy of the hysteria that accompanied his decision to play in South Bend. He was supposed to win national championships and Heismans, not lose to Northwestern.

Yes, he holds Notre Dame's single-season record for touchdown passes (19), but many of the school's passing heroes can't be found among the leaders in any category. Hornung didn't complete 50 percent of his passes in his ND career. Montana threw as many interceptions as touchdown passes. But they won the big games and

made the big plays. That's how greatness is defined at Notre Dame. The only numbers that count at ND are wins, losses and championships. Powlus hasn't won enough yet. And he knows it.

"You don't win the conference here," Powlus says. "You're not the best in the North or the East. You win a national championship, or it was just another year. We were 9-3 last year, and we could have been 10-2 or 11-1. Those would have been pretty good years. Quarterbacks are defined by national championships. It's a lot of pressure we put on ourselves, but that's our goal."

Like nearly everybody in Berwick (population 10,900), a blue-collar town built up during the first half of the century around the long-departed American Car & Foundry Company, Ron and Susan Powlus spent their Saturday afternoons rooting for JoePa and Penn State. Susan remembers one Saturday in 1982, when the family was gathered around the TV to watch the Nittany Lions, who were en route to winning their first national title. Her husband was praising Penn State's Todd Blackledge, telling the family about how the quarterback excelled on the field and in the classroom.

"They showed a picture of (Blackledge) on TV," Susan says. "And I said, 'Look at that boy. He's good-looking and smart and can play football so well. Where do people like him come from?'"

"My husband answered, 'From houses like ours.'"

Powlus hasn't delivered a championship to Notre Dame, but he does score high marks in the other categories on the All-American Boy scorecard. He's on schedule to graduate in 3½ years with a degree in marketing. He's polite, considerate and not too impressed with his celebrity. Notre Dame haters who met Powlus would find it tough to root against him. "He's the kind of guy you'd want to take home to your parents," says Irish baseball captain George Restovich, Powlus' roommate and close friend.

But those parents might not want to visit him. His dorm room is so strewn with clothes, books and just plain junk that he must keep Ivanina's framed picture in a desk drawer for safety reasons. To Notre Dame fans, Powlus may be a savior-in-waiting. To somebody who spends an afternoon with him, he's just a college kid.

Powlus' childhood was pretty standard, too. At age 11, he took on a paper route, rising at 5:15 each morning to deliver the news—but taking time to read his product first. He played just about every sport imaginable and was better at baseball than football until he began high school. Once he started at Berwick, Powlus came under the influence of football coach George Curry, whose 261-51-4 record in 25 seasons at the school includes three mythical national championships, and football became his passion.

Powlus, who probably would have started as a freshman had baseball obligations not prevented him from working that summer with Curry, waited patiently for his sophomore season before embarking on a fabulous high school career (7,339 yards, 62 touchdown passes, 37-5 record as a starter) in a town where close to 10,000 people turned out for nearly every home game. Washington Redskins quarterback coach Cam Cameron, who recruited Powlus while coaching at Michigan, marveled at Powlus' skills but was more impressed with his maturity.

"He was a senior in high school, but he carried himself like a senior in college," Cameron says. "Here was a highly touted kid who didn't push himself on you. He carried himself with confidence but didn't need to tell you how good he was every minute of the day."

Curry gave Powlus considerable control over the Berwick offense, which featured spread formations and a vertical passing game resembling Florida's. Powlus called audibles at the line whenever he felt it necessary and threw 30-35 times a game. Powlus also was a bruising runner and the team's best tackler. "He had a linebacker's mentality," Curry says. When Berwick won, Powlus got the credit. When it lost, he was blamed. Though hardly comparable to the nationwide attention directed at Notre Dame, the pressure at Berwick was a valuable primer for Powlus.

Curry may have taught Powlus how to read defenses, but Ron Sr. helped him manage his emotions and develop the pragmatic outlook Powlus maintains today. A negative newspaper article was dismissed as the opinion of just one person, as was a positive one. The advice has helped him considerably at Notre Dame. "Ronnie handles the criticism better than we do," Susan says.

Powlus' father also stressed the need to keep thinking while on the field, no matter what was happening around him. "When everybody

else was jumping up and down, I told Ron, 'Let them cheer; you think about what's next,'" Ron Sr. says. "We'll cheer after the game."

When Powlus broke his arm in South Bend against Navy, Ron and Susan—who were in town for the game—were able to stay behind and support him through the first few days of his recovery. It was something they couldn't do when Powlus fractured his collarbone his freshman season and they were home in Berwick. Powlus was down at first, but he understood the risks football players take. The following Monday, Ron told his mother: "It's a violent sport, and people get hurt. I'm going to get better and play next year."

Powlus' practical outlook should not be mistaken for a lack of fire. Powlus is such a perfectionist that Holtz doesn't ride him as relentlessly as he has his other quarterbacks. "Ron's going to be more critical of himself than you are as a coach," Holtz says. Powlus hates to lose at anything, a trait he gets from Susan, who admits they both agitate Ron Sr. with their hypercompetitiveness. Of course, that didn't stop father from whipping son on the golf course last summer, even after Powlus had taken some lessons from the Notre Dame golf coach. "He couldn't wait to get home and beat his dad," Ron Sr. says with a laugh. "I'll get him some day," Ron Jr. says.

With few exceptions, that drive doesn't manifest itself overtly on the football field. Powlus doesn't celebrate after every completion or kick the turf when he overthrows a receiver. Part of that is his father's influence, although the overwhelming attention he receives makes outbursts impossible.

"I can't really show emotion because, one way or another, somebody's going to take it wrong and say bad things about me," Powlus says. "I can't let down and be a normal guy. You can't just do anything you want because people are always watching you."

The enduring image of Notre Dame's shocking loss to Northwestern in the 1995 season opener is of the Irish's failed fourth-quarter, two-point conversion try that preserved the Wildcats' 17-15 victory. There's Powlus, falling backward after center Dusty Ziegler stepped on his foot, throwing a desperation Texas-leaguer. Unless prodded, Powlus can't (or at least doesn't want to) remember anything about the game. "Some games, you remember plays like it was yesterday," Powlus says. "I can't remember one play from the Northwestern game without somebody bringing it up."

But Powlus has vivid memories of the fourth quarter of the following week's game at Purdue, when Boilermakers cornerback Derrick Brown returned one of his passes 54 yards for a game-tying touchdown. Panic swirled around the sideline and the Purdue fans sensed a win. If Northwestern did it . . .

Powlus stepped into the huddle after the ensuing kickoff, surveyed the concerned faces around him and made his most important move of the game. He cracked a joke. "I just wanted to make it a little tough on you guys," he said, laughing. The safety valve had been opened. The next play, Randy Kinder dashed 52 yards for what proved to be the winning touchdown. Everybody saw Powlus throw the interception, but few knew how he handled the consequences.

"Everybody was just super tense," Powlus says. "On the sidelines, everybody was going nuts, and I was, too. But I didn't want the rest of the team to think, 'How's Ron? Is he handling it? Is he OK?' I came into the huddle and made the joke. After Randy scored the touchdown, I grabbed him and said, 'Thank you, Randy!'"

Powlus threw four touchdown passes in that game, the same school record-tying number he tossed in his first start against Northwestern, the game that has haunted him since he began playing at Notre Dame. Theismann considers Powlus' dramatic prime-time, national TV debut (he even handed the game ball to a child in a wheelchair afterward) the worst thing that could have happened to the quarterback. That's the way guys are supposed to *end* their careers. Hand the child the ball. Cue music. Roll credits. "I think it gave him a false sense of security," Theismann says.

Powlus disagrees. He wouldn't trade the exhilaration he felt for anything. And though the performance made the rest of his freshman year "almost impossible," according to Powlus, it was the exact reason he came to the school in the first place. "I think if Joe Theismann looked at it that way, he'd probably agree with me," Powlus says.

So, what then of Ron Powlus, quarterback? Is he the guy who threw four touchdown passes against Northwestern or the player

who, two weeks later, tossed as many interceptions against Michigan State? Or something in between? His supporters, and they are plentiful, blame the conservative Notre Dame system, with its absence of three- and four-receiver formations and heavy reliance on the run, for Powlus' stagnation.

"There's no question he's got the intangibles necessary to play quarterback," Philadelphia Eagles scout Dan Shonka says. "He can get rid of the ball quickly, knows who to throw it to, has good touch on the ball and good field vision, but he's not in a pass-oriented offense."

"Look at Joe Montana. He only completed about 52 percent of his passes for his career, and he was running a similar offense under Dan Devine."

Powlus' detractors counter that he still makes careless mistakes, like rolling right and throwing back left. They criticize his inconsistency from week to week. Sure, he played well in last year's 38-10 romp over Southern California, but he also was the guy who fumbled the snap amid confusion on fourth-and-1 that almost cost the Irish a game against Army the week before. It can't all be the offense.

"(Powlus) has shown no growth as a quarterback since coming to Notre Dame," Theismann says. Powlus still forces passes into coverage, a trait he describes as "trying to do too much" but one that others consider emblematic of poor decision-making skills.

There is some merit to the argument that Holtz's offense inhibits Powlus' true talents. "We probably didn't mix it up as much as we could have last year," Powlus says. "We'd run first down, run second down and throw on third down, if we had to. We did it so much that people were knowing when we were going to throw." Though Holtz counters that his teams have been extremely productive (32.7 points per game, 377.5 yards per game) during his 10 years at Notre Dame, he acknowledges that a more wide-open offense would make better use of Powlus' natural abilities. "I'd like to throw it 34 or 35 times a game this year," Holtz says. No one knows what Holtz's February proclamations will mean come November, but Powlus will take what he can get.

"It makes me happy to hear we're going to throw the football more, but my number one goal, by far, is to win," says Powlus, who never has griped about not throwing enough. "I don't care if we throw it 10 times a game every game if we go undefeated. That's fine with me."

Powlus' NFL future doesn't appear to hinge on whether he throws for 3,000 yards this season. That's a good thing, considering the unstable condition of Notre Dame's receiving corps, which returns just one player, flanker Emmett Mosley, who caught more than 10 passes last year. Like Miler, who averaged 22 attempts a game and completed 51.3 percent of his throws as a senior, Powlus will be judged on his potential to operate a pro offense, not on an inability to thrive in a college system. And if things go really bad, Powlus could always stay for a fifth year, something Theismann recommends but Powlus has expressed little interest in.

He'll have more trouble with the pro scouts when it comes to his durability. "That's ridiculous," says ND trainer Jim Russ, who has overseen Powlus' two rehabilitations. "No matter how big or strong a guy is, if you put him in the same situations (as Powlus), he'll have two broken bones, too."

Holtz believes his quarterback will succeed in the NFL, though he wishes Powlus were a little taller than 6-2½. But Holtz isn't talking about opening things up to help Ron Powlus. "I'm not interested in making Ron happy," he says. "I'm interested in making Notre Dame successful."

Holtz's bottom line is Powlus', too. When he chose to attend Notre Dame, Powlus came to win a national championship, period. He may not have been prepared completely for the intensity of the attention, but he has yet to regret his decision. Quarterbacking at Notre Dame may well be the toughest job in college football, and Powlus may never master the position the way his celebrated predecessors did. There was only one Bertelli, one Theismann, one Montana. And there is only one Ron Powlus. That's good enough for him.

"You don't have to read about the legacy when you're here," Powlus says. "You know it. It's stuff people talk to you about, and you find out things. You know you're in a line of quarterbacks that has been great, and it's fun to be here. I'm excited about it."

"I don't think, 'Oh, man, I've got to live up to what they did.' I play my own game. I want to win a national championship here. I want to do good things here."

Michael Bradley is a free-lance writer based in Philadelphia.

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Authority**

The Sporting News FANTASY FOOTBALL CHALLENGE '96

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GRAND
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For Only
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**Pick a team of 20 starters
using a \$30,000,000 salary cap**

ROSTER

- Starting team consists of 20 players:
 - 3 Kickers 6 Running Backs 6 Wide Receivers
 - 3 Quarterbacks 2 Tight Ends
- Starting team's salary cannot exceed the \$30,000,000 salary cap.
- Taxi squad consists of any 10 players.
- Salary cap and position distribution rules do not apply for the taxi squad.
- Unlisted players may be placed on your taxi squad. Their salary will be \$750,000. They will be assigned a position by CDM after Week 1 and may be placed on your starting team for Week 2.

**We'll place your entry in a
league and a division**

LEAGUE FORMATION

- Leagues and divisions are formed on a first-come, first-served basis.
- 25 teams form a league. 10 leagues form a division.
- All teams compete for the overall grand prize.
- Teams may have many of the same players, but no two teams with the same roster will be in the same league.

REPORTS

- Receive a five-page report weekly or bi-weekly. You automatically receive bi-weekly reports with your entry fee. (First reports mailed September 11th)
- Updated league rosters and top 5 in your division & top 5 overall sent every 6 weeks.
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ENTRY DEADLINES

- Entries must be phoned or faxed by Sat., Aug. 31, 1996.
- Mailed entries must be postmarked no later than Aug. 31, 1996 and received no later than Thursday, Sept. 5, 1996.

**Football team owners shared
\$515,652
in Cash Prizes Last Year!**

3 WAYS TO EARN CASH PRIZES

- League (1 in 5 earn cash)
- Division (1 in 10 earn more cash)
- Overall (Top 25 earn lots of cash)

**1 in 25 will earn
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Place	Overall Prizes (all entries)	Division Prizes (250 teams)	League Prizes (25 teams)
1st	\$25,000	\$1,000	\$600
2nd	\$10,000	\$500	\$300
3rd	\$5,000	\$250	\$100
4th	\$2,500	\$100	\$75
5th	\$1,000	\$75	\$50
6th to 10th	\$500	\$50	
11th to 15th	\$250	\$30	
16th to 25th	\$100	\$25	

**Plus \$100 will be awarded to
the overall leader each week*
*beginning with week 2**

**More Cash Prize Winners
Than Any Other
National Challenge**

COST TO PLAY

- \$79.00 for an entry postmarked by July 20, 1996
- \$89.00 for an entry postmarked by August 10, 1996.
- \$99.00 for an entry postmarked after August 10, 1996.
- \$79.00 for each additional entry.
- \$10.00 for reports to be mailed to a second address.
- \$10.00 per address per team for reports to be mailed weekly rather than bi-weekly.

TRANSACTION FEES

- To make player transactions, a toll-free 800 number and an account number will be provided.

The transaction fees are as follows:

- Any Player move before Sept. 1 (unlimited)\$1 each
- Bye Player Moved In or Out (unlimited)\$1 each
- Taxi Squad Switch (unlimited)\$3 each
- New Player Purchase (limit 8)\$10 each
- TSN Free Agent Acquisition (limit 3)No Charge
- Player transactions must be made by Saturday 9 PM Central Time in order to be effective for the upcoming Sunday and Monday games, or by 9 PM CST the day preceding any other game (changes for Thursday games must be made by 9 PM Wednesday night).

SCORING

- Each team will be ranked within its league, division and overall by eight statistical categories:

Total Scoring	Total Receiving Yards
Kicker Scoring	Receiving Yards Average
Total Rushing Yards	Total Passing Yards
Rushing Yards Average	Passing Yards Average

- The following formula is used to calculate total scoring: (Rushing TDs x 6)+(Passing TDs x 3)+(Receiving TDs x 3)+(Field Goals x 3)+Extra Points+(Other TDs x 6).
- The average categories are calculated using your team total completions, carries and receptions.
- Rankings will be determined by using the Rotisserie®-style ranking system. Each team is ranked in league, division and overall.
- Stats are accumulated weekly for all 20 starting players. The stat week begins with games played on Thursday and ends with games played on Monday.
- All pro football statistics accumulated by the players on the starting team, regardless of what position they play during the season, contribute to a team's statistics totals. Special team yardage does not count.
- Taxi squad players' stats don't contribute to team's stat totals.
- Previous stats by a player before he was on your roster do not count.
- A player's statistics are added to your team's statistics totals only during the weeks that he is in your starting team.
- Pre-season and play-off statistics do not contribute to your team's statistics totals.
- Division points are calculated by ranking your team's statistics totals versus every other team's stats in your division's 10 leagues.
- Overall points are calculated by ranking your team's statistics totals versus all other entries in *The Sporting News™ Fantasy Football Challenge*.

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Call 1-800-568-6288**

- The Sporting News™ Fantasy Football Challenge* welcomes entries from around the world. All fees, however, must be paid with U.S. funds. For Canadian, Mexican and overseas entries, please add \$10 to cover additional mailing costs. If needed, our toll number is 1-314-991-1511.
- Player transactions can be made with live commissioners 9 AM - 9 PM Tuesday through Saturday. No transactions will be accepted on Sunday or Monday.
- You must be 18 years or older to participate.
- No employees of CDM, Inc., The Sporting News Publishing Company, or their families are eligible to play.
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- Void where prohibited by law.
- Further explanation of all rules will be contained in your Welcome Package.
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The Sporting News

FANTASY FOOTBALL CHALLENGE

Player Salaries

Kickers			Quarterbacks (cont)			Running Backs (cont)			Tight Ends			Wide Receivers			Wide Receivers		
ID	Player	TM Salary	ID	Player	TM Salary	ID	Player	TM	ID	Player	TM Salary	ID	Player	TM Salary	ID	Player	TM Salary
1	BONOL, CHRIS	DAL 2070	124	HARBAUGH, JIM	IND 1590	237	KIRBY, TERRY	NA 740	401	DILGER, KEN	IND 1810	501	RICE, JERRY	SF 2400	558	TOOMER, AMANI	NYG 800
2	ELAM, JASON	DEN 2050	125	KRIEG, DAVE	ARZ 1530	238	BROOKS, REGGIE	NA 720	402	COATES, BEN	NE 1680	502	IRVIN, MICHAEL	DAL 1930	559	VAN DYKE, ALEX	NYJ 800
3	REVEZ, FUD	MIN 2040	126	MIRER, RICK	SEA 1510	239	SMITH, ROBERT	NA 720	403	SHARPE, SHANNON	DEN 1670	503	THIGPEN, YANCEY	PIT 1840	560	STILL, BRYAN	SD 800
4	ANDERSEN, MORTON	ATL 1980	127	BONO, STEVE	KC 1500	240	STEWART, JAMES T	JAC 720	404	GREEN, ERIC	MIA 1650	504	MOORE, HERMAN	DET 1780	561	MILLS, ERNIE	PIT 790
5	JOHNSON, NORM	PIT 1970	128	KRAMER, ERIK	CHI 1410	241	POTTS, ROOSEVELT	IND 700	405	MITCHELL, JOHNNY	NA 1450	505	ELLARD, HENRY	WAS 1780	562	JETT, JAMES	RAI 750
6	HANSON, JASON	DET 1960	129	DILFER, TRENT	TB 1350	242	MITCHELL, BRIAN	WAS 700	406	HARRIS, JACKIE	TB 1280	506	GALLOWAY, JOEY	SEA 1740	563	ISMAIL, QADRY	MIN 750
7	CARNEY, JOHN	SD 1940	130	SHULER, HEATH	WAS 1300	243	GREEN, ROBERT	CHI 660	407	MCGEE, TONY	NA 1230	507	BROWN, TIM	RAI 1710	564	BAILEY, AARON	IND 730
8	CHRISTIE, STEVE	BUF 1880	131	MILLER, CHRIS	NA 1160	244	HARMON, RONNIE	NA 660	408	JONES, BRENT	SF 1190	508	MILLER, ANTHONY	DEN 1710	565	BARNETT, FRED	MIA 730
9	STOYANOVICH, PETE	MIA 1860	132	CUNNINGHAM, R.	NA 1120	245	SMITH, LAMAR	SEA 660	409	MITCHELL, PETE	JAC 1150	509	SANDERS, CHRIS	HOU 1700	566	BROOKS, BILL	NA 720
10	MURRAY, EDDIE	NA 1840	133	RICHARDSON, BUCKY	KC 780	246	THOMAS, RODNEY	HOU 600	410	JACKSON, KEITH	NA 1140	510	FRYAR, IRVING	PHI 1600	567	HESTER, JESSIE	STL 710
11	JACKIE, CHRIS	GB 1780	134	HEBERT, BOBBY	NA 750	247	ANDERS, KIMBLE	NA 590	411	WALLS, WESLEY	CAR 1050	511	BRUCE, ISAAC	STL 1450	568	TIMPSON, MICHAEL	CHI 700
12	PELFREY, DOUG	NA 1760	135	CHANDLER, CHRIS	HOU 750	248	BROUSSARD, STEVE	SEA 580	412	CHMURA, MARK	GB 940	512	SCOTT, DARNAY	CIN 1400	569	JEFFRIES, HAYWOOD	NA 690
13	DEL GRECO, AL	HOU 1720	136	MCNAIR, STEVE	HOU 740	249	TILLMAN, LEWIS	NA 580	413	NOVACEK, JAY	DAL 820	513	SANDERS, FRANK	ARZ 1380	570	HAWKINS, COURTNEY	TB 680
14	STOVER, MATT	BAL 1700	137	EVANS, VINCE	RAI 720	250	MOORE, RON	NYJ 570	414	DUDLEY, RICKY	RAI 800	514	RISON, ANDRE	BAL 1340	571	ISMAIL, RAGHIB	NA 680
15	BUTLER, KEVIN	CHI 1700	138	FRIESZ, JOHN	SEA 720	251	HEARST, GARRISON	NA 540	415	BATTAGLIA, MARCO	CIN 600	515	HARPER, ALVIN	TB 1330	572	INGRAM, MARK	NA 670
16	BRIEN, DOUG	NO 1690	139	PEETE, RODNEY	PHI 710	252	MURRELL, ADRIAN	NYJ 540	416	DUNN, JASON	PHI 600	516	PICKENS, CARL	CIN 1310	573	DAWSON, LAKE	KC 660
17	KASAY, JOHN	CAR 1610	140	RYPIEN, MARK	FA 600	253	BENNETT, EDGAR	GB 540	417	CONWELL, ERNIE	STL 600	517	GRAHAM, JEFF	NYJ 1300	574	JEFFERSON, SHAWN	NE 660
18	DAVIS, GREG	ARZ 1580	141	STEWART, KORDELL	PIT 600	254	HAYDEN, AARON	SD 480	418	CROSS, HOWARD	NYG 570	518	REED, ANDRE	BUF 1100	575	STOKES, J.J.	SF 650
19	JAEGER, JEFF	RAI 1570	142	WALSH, STEVE	STL 600	255	GRAHAM, SCOTTIE	NA 480	419	BAVARO, MARK	NA 480	519	MARTIN, TONY	SD 1170	576	RUSSELL, DERRICK	HOU 630
20	BAHR, MATT	NE 1550				256	BIENIEMY, ERIC	CIN 470	420	DRAYTON, TROY	STL 460	520	DAVIS, WILLIE	HOU 1170	577	MARTIN, KELVIN	NA 620
21	HOLLIS, MIKE	JAC 1480				257	LOGAN, MARC	WAS 460	421	BROWN, DEREK2	JAC 450	521	REED, JAKE	MIN 1110	578	WRIGHT, ALEXANDER	STL 610
22	LOWERY, NICK	NYJ 1470				258	MCNAIR, TODD	NA 450	422	WEST, ED	PHI 380	522	BRISBY, VINCENT	NA 1100	579	MCDUFFIE, O.J.	MIA 590
23	HUSTED, MICHAEL	TB 1380				259	RUSSELL, LEONARD	SD 450	423	COOPER, ADRIAN	SF 370	523	MOORE, ROB	ARZ 1100	580	PROEHL, RICKY	SEA 590
24	ELLIOTT, LIN	NA 1250				260	CHAVER, AARON	DEN 440	424	CASH, KEITH	KC 360	524	EMANUEL, BERT	ATL 1090	581	BIRDEN, JJ	ATL 590
25	BIASUCCI, DEAN	NA 1220	201	SANDERS, BARRY	DET 3860	261	FLETCHER, TERRELL	SD 430	425	CASH, KERRY	RAI 350	525	BLADES, BRIAN	SEA 1080	582	GIVINS, ERNEST	NA 580
26	LOHMILLER, CHIP	STL 1080	202	SMITH, EMMITT	DAL 3530	262	MEGGITT, DAVID	NE 420	426	JOHNSON, LONNIE	BUF 340	526	MATHIS, TERENCE	ATL 1080	583	JOHNSON, CHARLES	PIT 580
27	PETERSON, TODD	SEA 1020	203	MARTIN, CURTIS	NE 2690	263	WILLIAMS, SHERMAN	DAL 400	427	ASHER, JAMIE	WAS 320	527	PERRIMAN, BRETT	DET 1060	584	CHREBET, WAYNE	NYJ 580
28	BLANCHARD, CARY	IND 940	204	WARREN, CHRIS	SEA 2630	265	BAILEY, JOHNNY	NA 390	428	HAYES, JONATHAN	PIT 310	528	CARTER, CHRIS	MIN 1050	585	VANOVER, TAMARICK	KC 570
29	ZENDEJAS, TONY	NA 910	205	DAVIS, TERRELL	DEN 2590	266	BERNSTINE, ROD	NA 390	429	PIERCE, AARON	NYG 300	529	CARRIER, MARK J	NA 1050	586	SMALL, TORRANCE	NO 570
30	TREADWELL, DAVID	NA 860	206	WATTERS, RICKY	PHI 1780	267	SPIKES, IRVING	MIA 380	430	SMITH, IRV	NO 300	530	EARLY, QUINN	BUF 1010	587	COPELAND, RUSSELL	NA 560
31	ANDERSON, GARY	PHI 850	207	HEYWARD, CRAIG	ATL 1430	268	WHITE, LORENZO	BAL 380	431	GLOVER, ANDREW	NA 300	531	MOULDS, ERIC	BUF 1000	588	HOWARD, DESMOND	NA 560
32	DALUIISO, BRAD	NYG 720	208	FAULK, MARSHALL	IND 1340	269	MILBURN, GLYN	DEN 370	432	FURIA, CHRISTIAN	SEA 290	532	HARRISON, MARVIN	IND 1000	589	HILL, RANDAL	MIA 560
33	WILKINS, JEFF	SF 710	209	MEANS, NATRONE	JAC 1330	270	LEE, AMP	MIN 350	433	SLOAN, DAVID	DET 280	533	STILL, BRYAN	SD 1000	590	SEAY, MARK	PHI 550
			210	BETTIS, JEROME	PIT 1320	271	CENTERS, LARRY	ARZ 340	434	HORTON, ETHAN	NA 280	534	GLENN, TERRY	NE 1000	591	MCCARDELL, KEENAN	JAC 530
			211	BROWN, GARY	NA 1300	272	ANDERSON, JAMAL	ATL 330	435	METZELAARS, PETE	NA 270	535	JOHNSON, KEYSAWN	NYJ 1000	592	BEEBE, DON	GB 500
			212	MORRIS, BYRON	PIT 1240	273	MOORE, DERRICK	NA 310	436	BRADY, KYLE	NYJ 260	536	KENNISON, EDDIE	STL 1000	593	DAWSEY, LAWRENCE	TB 490
			213	THOMAS, THURMAN	BUF 1230	274	BYARS, KEITH	MIA 310	437	WALKER, DERRICK	KC 260	537	JACKSON, MICHAEL	BAL 970	594	HOBBBS, DARYL	RAI 470
			214	ALLEN, TERRY	NA 1200	275	WILLIAMS, JOHN L	NA 300	438	KINCEN, BRIAN	BAL 250	538	BROOKS, ROBERT	GB 940	595	WILLIAMS, KEVIN	DAL 460
			215	ALLEN, MARCUS	KC 1200	276	STEWART, JAMES M	MIN 290	439	ARMSTRONG, TYJI	TB 220	539	CONWAY, CURTIS	CHI 940	596	MARTIN, ERIC	NA 460
			216	HOLMES, DARICK	BUF 1180	277	LEVENS, DORSEY	GB 290	440	BRUENER, MARK	PIT 210	540	DAWKINS, SEAN	IND 900	597	PRITCHARD, MIKE	DEN 450
			217	METCALF, ERIC	ATL 1180	278	FLOYD, WILLIAM	SF 250	441	PUPUNU, ALFRED	SD 210	541	CALLOWAY, CHRIS	NYG 900	598	MOORE, WILL	NE 430
			218	GARNER, CHARLIE	PHI 1130							542	WILSON, CHARLES	NA 870	599	TURNER, FLOYD	NA 420
			219	SALAAM, RASHAAN	CHI 1080							543	SHERARD, MIKE	NA 870	600	EDWARDS, ANTHONY	ARZ 400
			220	BATES, MARIO	NO 1060							544	WESTBROOK, MICHAEL	WAS 860	601	WINANS, TYDUS	WAS 360
			221	HOARD, LEROY	BAL 1060							545	COPELAND, HORACE	TB 850	602	HASTINGS, ANDRE	NA 360
			222	HAMPTON, RODNEY	NYG 1010							546	CLARK, GARY	NA 850	603	TILLMAN, CEDRIC	NA 360
			223	RHETT, ERRICT	TB 1010							547	WILLIAMS, CALVIN	PHI 840	604	LANGHORNE, REGGIE	NA 350
			224	BIKABUTUKA, TIM	CAR 1000							548	SHARPE, STERLING	NA 840	605	BAILEY, VICTOR	NA 340
			225	GEORGE, EDDIE	HOU 1000							549	HAYNES, MICHAEL	NO 840	606	MONK, ART	NA 340
			226	PHILLIPS, LAWRENCE	STL 1000							550	ALEXANDER, DERRICK	BAL 830	607	MCCAFFREY, ED	DEN 330
			227	PEGRAM, ERIC	PIT 990							551	GREEN, WILLIE	CAR 820	608	CARTER, ANTHONY	NA 330
			228	KAUFMAN, NAPOLEON	RAI 990							552	TAYLOR, JOHN	NA 820	609	KINCEN, TODD	STL 320
			229	WALKER, HERSHEL	NYG 980							553	MORTON, JOHNNIE	DET 820	610	STONE, DWIGHT	CAR 320
			230	WILLIAMS, HARVEY	RAI 970							554	SLAUGHTER, WESTERNA	820	611	JOHNSON, VANCE	DEN 310
			231	HILL, GREG	KC 960							555	MUHAMMAD, MUHSIN	CAR 800	612	ARMOUR, JUSTIN	NA 290
			232	JOHNSON, JOHNNY	SF 910							556	ENGRAM, BOBBY	CHI 800	613	MORGAN, ANTHONY	NA 290
			233	PARMALEE, BERNIE	MIA 880							557	MAYES, DERRICK	GB 800			
			234	MCELROY, LEELEAND	AZ 800												
			235	ALSTOTT, MIKE	TB 800												
			236	FOSTER, BARRY	NA 800												

Positions and salaries, as listed here, remain the same all season!



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Player's team based on team as of May 1, 1996. NA indicates that player was not on a team as of May 1, 1996.

Only players listed on this page can be placed in your starting line-up the 1st week!

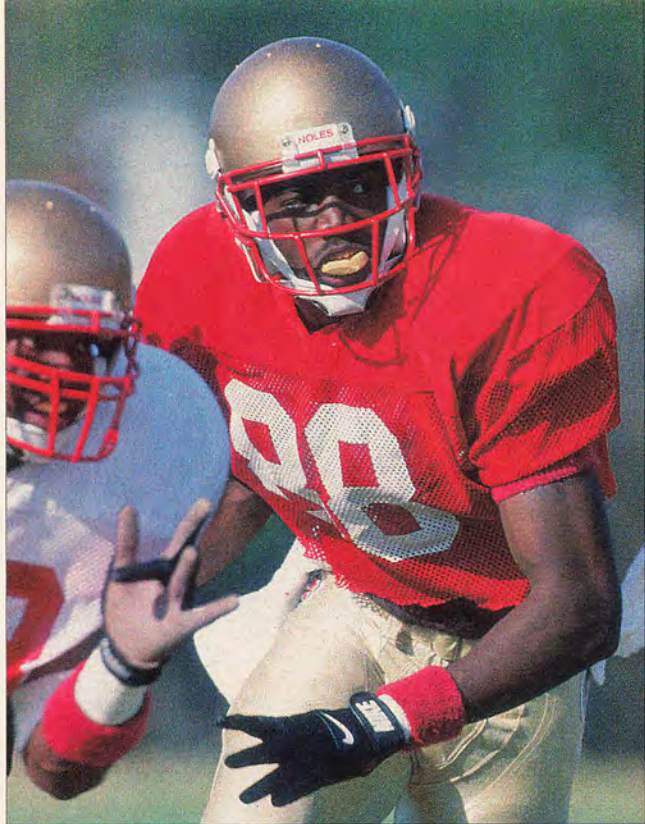
Complete the entry form and enter your team using a Visa or Master Card by calling 1-800-568-6288 from 9 AM to 9 PM Monday thru Sunday or by fax (314) 991-1564 anytime. To pay with check or money order mail to: CDM, Inc., 11756 Borman Drive, Suite 220, St. Louis, MO 63146-4133

Entries must be phoned or faxed by 9 PM Saturday, August 31, 1996

All salaries are in 000's. Players not listed on this page, if selected, must be placed on taxi squad until week 2. Salary for unlisted players is \$750.

I. Team Owner Information			II. Starting Team			III. Taxi Squad		
Name _____	Pos _____	Id _____	Name _____	Pos _____	Id _____	Name _____	Pos _____	Id _____
Team Name _____	Salary _____	_____	Salary _____	_____	_____	Salary _____	_____	_____
Address _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
City _____ St. _____ Zip _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Phone _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
MC/VISA _____ Exp _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
\$99 Challenge Entry (\$79 or \$99 if early) Additional Entries Quantity _____ x \$79.00 = _____ Weekly Reports Quantity _____ x \$10.00 = _____ Additional Address Quantity _____ x \$10.00 = _____ TOTAL PAYMENT Have you played a TSN Challenge before? _____ If yes, account number: _____			Total Team Salary (cannot exceed \$30,000,000) \$ _____					

**Randy Moss seems ready
to soar for Florida State
after a tough, bumpy ride
as a prep star, Irish reject**



PHIL COALE FOR THE SPORTING NEWS

FIRST TURBULENCE, THEN TAKEOFF

By GERALD ENSLEY

Everyone who saw Randy Moss compete in high school sports has a favorite memory. Like the state championship track meet when he was a sophomore, in which Moss won the 100 and 200 meters despite competing in the sport for the first time.

Like the district championship baseball game when he was a junior, in which Moss outran a ball hit over his head and made an eye-popping catch in center field.

Like the Christmas tournament basketball game when he was a senior, in which he dunked the ball over three defenders in the closing seconds to win the game.

Like any of the hundreds of receptions, tackles and interceptions he made in three years of playing football for Dupont High in Belle, W.Va., where he was a Parade magazine All-American and one of the nation's top five recruits in 1995.

But to those who have never seen him play—and even to many

of those who have—there is but one occurrence that stays chalked against his name. It is what many college football fans will think of first this year when they see Moss playing for Florida State.

It is “The Fight.”

On March 24, 1995, Randy Moss and a Dupont High classmate, both black, beat and kicked a white classmate, who allegedly made a racial slur against Moss' friend. The fight in a school hallway sent the white student to an intensive-care unit. It meant a 30-day jail sentence and expulsion from school for Moss. And it changed his future.

Before the fight, Moss had been a Notre Dame recruit, signed to play at the school where he dreamed of playing since he was 12. After the fight, Notre Dame officials announced Moss' application had been improperly filled out and refused him admission.

It was a devastating blow to Moss and further fuel for a controversy that galvanized sports fans in West Virginia, where Moss is the

only athlete to be named the state's best football player (as a senior) and best basketball player (junior and senior years).

Yet it was Notre Dame's decision that now puts Moss on the cusp of his first season of college football—at Florida State.

When Moss was denied admission, Fighting Irish coach Lou Holtz called an old coaching buddy, Florida State's Bobby Bowden, and recommended that Bowden give Moss a scholarship.

After much deliberation by athletic and administration officials—and dismay from critics—Florida State did accept Moss. But athletic director Dave Hart tried to reduce the pressure on all parties by requiring that Moss be redshirted his first year.

That year on the sidelines is now behind Moss, and the spotlight is about to shine brightly again.

On the field, Moss will be one of four heavily used receivers in the Seminoles' high-voltage offense. He is penciled in as the starting punt and kick returner. FSU coaches try mightily—with little success—to downplay the impact Moss may have on a team expected to contend for the national title.

"You hate to say anything because he hasn't proved it on the field yet," Bowden says. "But (in practices) he sticks out like a sore thumb. Whoever is playing against him better hang on to their hat."

But the question this fall, maybe for several falls, is whether Moss can outrun his past. If he plays spectacularly, he will face more questions about The Fight. If he fails, he will be remembered for The Fight. It is an uncomfortable prospect for a man-child of 19.

"I got a lot of attention (last season) even though I wasn't playing," Moss says. "Maybe it's going to build up, maybe it's going to stay the same. I'm looking forward to the season, but not the attention. It's a distraction."

Whatever the distractions, Moss will get the opportunity that The Fight delayed. And the only certainty to some is that Moss deserves the chance to put the negativity behind him.

"I would hope you get to go through life making more than just one mistake," Bowden says. "I'm glad someone forgave me for some of the things I've done. I hope someone would give one of my sons a second chance."

"You hope Randy can be allowed to start his life again."

Belle, W.Va., is a small town about 15 miles south of Charleston, the state's largest city. That part of Kanawha County is a rural tableau of rolling hills and tapped-out coal mines. The population is blue-collar. The people take sports seriously: Jerry West came from Kanawha County. But folks in Kanawha, like maybe folks in a lot of places, still are struggling with race relations.

Dupont High in Belle has 670 students, but fewer than 40 are black. There is a hallway known as "Redneck Alley," where white boys lounge against lockers and make derogatory comments about passing blacks. Black students occasionally receive phone calls at home in which anonymous callers make racial slurs. Black students claim their teachers are disinterested in them.

"It's a bad place," Moss says. "No kid should have to go to school and hear racial slurs. No one should have to come to school with fear in their heart. Nobody ever really bothered me. But it happened to my friends."

One of those friends, a black youth whose name hasn't been published because he was a juvenile at the time, was sitting in a Dupont class on March 24, 1995. Sitting next to him was a white student, Ernest Roy Johnson.

Details and interpretations of what happened next vary. Some say Johnson was a habitue of Redneck Alley who carved or wrote a message with the N-word onto his desktop and showed it to the black youth next to him. Others say Johnson was not a markedly prejudiced white kid and that he merely showed his classmate a message that already was there.

Either way, the black youth challenged Johnson to a fight after school. And he asked Moss, who at 6-4, 200 pounds was five inches taller and 40 pounds heavier than either of the two planned combatants, to accompany him and "watch his back."

"No one wants to see his friend get beat up," Moss says. "I'm just a trash talker. But I'll throw fists if I have to."

As it turned out, the black youth pummeled Johnson, knocking

him to the ground and kicking him. By most accounts, Moss stepped in to pull away his friend—but then delivered two parting kicks of his own because "that racial stuff aggravates me."

Johnson wound up in the hospital with a torn spleen. Moss wound up in the eye of a storm that seemed to engage every newspaper and TV station in West Virginia, plus half the population.

"It was a huge controversy because of who he was," *Charleston Daily Mail* sports columnist Chuck Landon says. "If he had been Randy 'Jones,' there would have been no to-do. But because he was the best athlete in the state, maybe the best ever from West Virginia, it became a *cause celebre*."

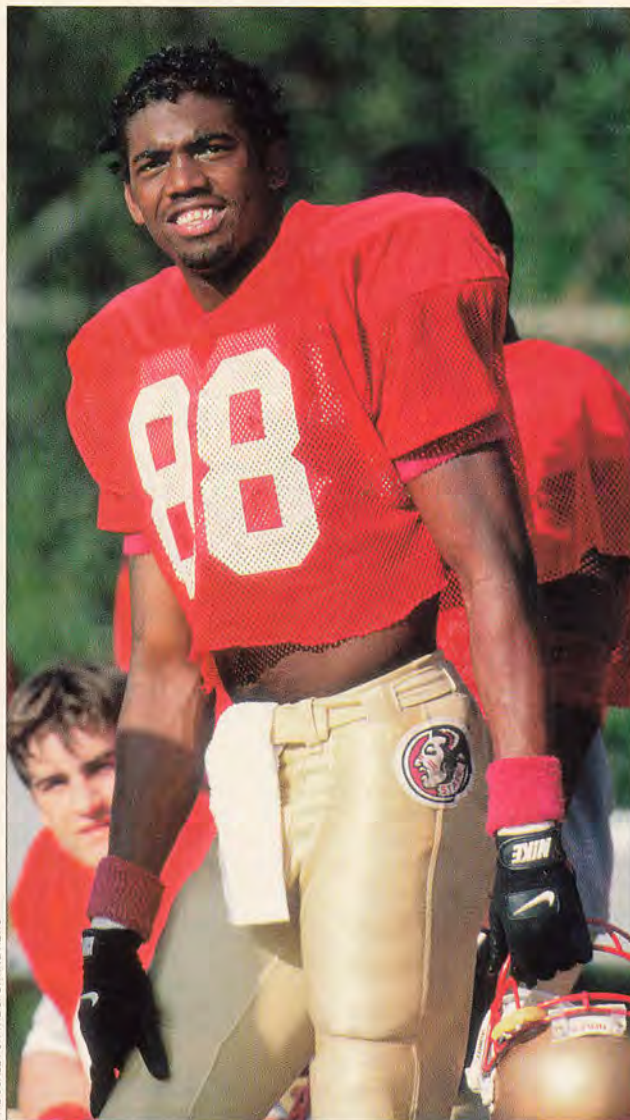
Moss was expelled from Dupont and had to attend Cabell Alternative School to receive his degree. No charges were brought against his black friend because he was a juvenile. But Moss—only three weeks past his 18th birthday—was charged with "malicious wounding," a felony.

"I'm not excusing Randy. What he did was wrong," says Timothy DiPiero, Moss' attorney. "But if it had happened three weeks earlier, it may have never been known (to the public)."

DiPiero had met Moss for the first time only three days before the fight at a gathering of Notre Dame boosters—DiPiero is a Notre Dame graduate—in Charleston. After Moss was charged, DiPiero's name was recommended to Moss' mother, Maxine.

DiPiero quickly got the felony reduced to a misdemeanor charge of battery. But he could win very little on the sentencing: a rather shocking 30 days in jail. It was the sentence recommended to prosecutors by Johnson, the boy who was beaten up.

"Thirty days for a first conviction on battery is rare," DiPiero says. "But I was told, 'Take it or leave it.' The prosecutors did not want to catch any grief from the victim."



Randy Moss is eager to start living his dream as a big-time college receiver after a year on the sidelines. Moss wanted to play for Notre Dame but saw those hopes vanish in the controversy that ensued after a much-publicized school fight.

By the time of the sentencing, August 2, 1995, Moss had been accepted by Florida State, and he was expected to report within a week. The judge allowed Moss to serve three days and go to Tallahassee. He served the remainder of the sentence over the summer (see Editor's Note, page 41).

Randy Moss is a gifted, natural athlete. He starred in his single seasons of high school track and baseball, which he took up mainly as diversions. He dominated West Virginia high school basketball and may follow the example of Charlie Ward by playing basketball and football at Florida State. He can drive a golf ball 250 yards. He loves to swim and is an accomplished diver. About the only sport he can't play is tennis. "My girlfriend and I tried to play a few times last summer, and I kept hitting the ball over the fence," he says.

Obviously, he also can play a little football. He helped Dupont to state championships as a sophomore and junior and was disconsolate as a senior when his team lost, 10-7, in the finals.

Moss caught only 39 passes in his senior year but made them count for 808 yards and 14 touchdowns. He ran back three kicks for touchdowns, each return 75 yards or longer. He added 73 tackles as a defensive back.

Dozens of schools recruited him. But having been a Notre Dame fan since the 1989 Fiesta Bowl, when Notre Dame beat West Virginia—"That was the first game I can remember watching all the way through"—Moss was Irish-inclined. "I'd always told my friends if Notre Dame wants me, no other college will get me," he says.

Notre Dame coaches were ecstatic. Tall receivers who run 4.3 40s, have a vertical leap of 39 inches and possess great hands always are in short supply. When they signed him in February 1995, Notre Dame coaches penciled him into the lineup for September.

"There is no question Randy would have played for us last year; we thought he was an awesome talent," Notre Dame offensive coordinator Dave Roberts says. "(Coaches) were sick when he couldn't come to Notre Dame."

The decision to release Moss from his letter-of-intent was made by Notre Dame administrators in May. Officially, they said Moss had turned in his application too late and hadn't properly completed the 14-page form that requires the student to write an essay about why he wants to attend Notre Dame.

Moss admits the application, due about the time he was expelled from Dupont, was late. "But only by about a month," he says. Though Moss is a good student—he had a 3.0 grade-point average in high school and attained the NCAA-required score on his college admission test on the first try—he concedes he isn't a great writer. He said he wrote the essay, described by some as "horrid," by himself and "didn't check the grammar or punctuation."

But many, including Moss, believe the application denial was just a smoke screen.

In 1993, the book *Under the Tarnished Dome* criticized Holtz and the Fighting Irish for hypocrisies in admissions and treatment of student/athletes. In view of that book and subsequent reports of off-field problems involving Irish players, Notre Dame officials apparently have become gun-shy about bad publicity—the kind that might have accompanied the acceptance of Moss.

"No one is more protective of its image of bringing in quality student/athletes than Notre Dame," says a source close to the school, who didn't want to be named. "Obviously, the fight made a difference. (Administration officials) thought Moss was a rotten kid."

After Notre Dame's decision, other schools renewed their pursuit of Moss. But Holtz's recommendation to Bowden quickly was embraced by Maxine Moss, Randy's mother, who, according to DiPiero, liked Bowden's Christian background and the fact Holtz had told her that Bowden would look after Randy.

"My mom had some kind of brainstorm," Randy says. "She told me about (Florida State) and I just wanted to check it out."

Florida State recruiting coordinator Ronnie Cottrell and offensive coordinator Mark Richt investigated Moss' personality in talks with DiPiero, Dupont coaches and Maxine Moss before offering a scholarship. A university admissions committee deliberated for more than two weeks before approving the application.

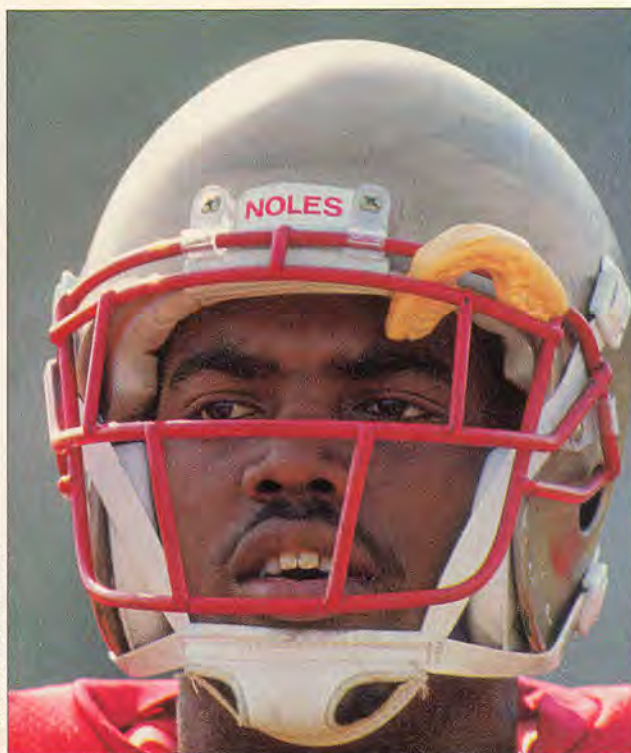
Even with those deliberations, Florida State faced criticism.

The school was only one year removed from the scandal in which several members of the 1993 national championship team reportedly received free apparel from a local sporting goods store. That controversy was followed by one in which the athletic director, Bob

Goin, resigned after being accused of receiving a free roof on his home from contractors renovating Florida State's Doak Campbell Stadium. Later, three players incurred criminal charges over separate incidents involving women.

So Florida State's acceptance of Moss wasn't widely applauded. One radio talk-show host labeled Bowden the "Jerry Tarkanian of college football."

Hart, who became Florida State athletic director six months before Moss was admitted, squelched much of that reaction with his decision to have Moss sit out his first season. Hart said he made an agreement with Moss not to talk about his decision publicly, and he



Randy Moss, a former West Virginia high school sensation, appears to be the real deal. Florida State's Bobby Bowden, for one, can't wait to find out.

answers most questions about the redshirting with the declaration, "I deemed it to be in everyone's best interests."

Clearly, the redshirting reduced the pressure on Moss in his first year away from home. Just as clearly, it reduced some of the pressure on the Seminoles' image.

In a 1995 season in which FSU uncharacteristically lost two games, Moss' redshirting might not have been in the best interests of the football program. From the outset, Moss dazzled teammates during practices. In midseason, quarterback Danny Kanell went to Bowden and sought to have the redshirt decision overturned.

"You can't blame DK," Seminoles cornerback James Colzie says. "How can a quarterback not love a guy who's going to catch the ball every time? We call (Moss) Jerry Rice; he's that good."

Though Moss' physical gifts were immediately evident, his work ethic wasn't. Receivers coach Jeff Bowden said Moss struggled with his practice-but-can't-play status.

"He talked back, he came late to practices, he walked out of meetings early," Jeff Bowden says. "You don't expect him to handle the disappointment like an adult, and he didn't."

But starting with the Orange Bowl, when Moss traveled with the team to its game against—ironically—Notre Dame, Moss' attitude began to improve. In the winter conditioning drills, he became one of the hardest workers and added 12 pounds of muscle to his slender frame. He was attentive and disciplined in spring practice.

"He realized it was his turn," Jeff Bowden says. "If he wanted to play, he has to do things to be ready. The thing I've liked is kids that gifted often feel they don't have to listen or learn. But Randy has done the things off the field he needs to succeed on the field. He has really been a surprise (with his attitude)."

Moss will start the season as a backup to Andre Cooper, a senior who in '95 set a Florida State season record with 15 touchdown catches. But in the Seminoles' rotating offense, Moss will get plenty of playing time.

Already, Moss has begun crafting a legend. In Orange Bowl drills, he returned punts against the first-team defense. Tackled after a 10-yard return on his first attempt, Moss turned to Jeff Bowden and said, "Coach, I'm taking this one all the way." Sure enough, Moss fielded a high spiral, ran left, cut right, found a seam and dashed 60 yards for a touchdown.

"That tells you he doesn't lack for confidence," Jeff Bowden says.

Much like another notable Seminole, Deion Sanders, Moss' confidence occasionally borders on cockiness. A self-described "beast" and trash talker on the field, Moss is a boisterous personality. He likes to joke and boast and is "definitely a class clown," Colzie says. "He's one of the funniest people I've ever met."

Such behavior concerns Florida State coaches, who worry what success might breed. Yet adults who have dealt with Moss said there is a quieter and more serious side.

Joe Snodgrass is principal of Cabell Alternative School, which Moss attended for two months after being expelled from Dupont. Snodgrass is a longtime educator and was principal of Dupont when Moss' mother attended. Moss ate lunch with Snodgrass most days during his two months at Cabell, and Snodgrass insists Moss should not be judged by the fight.

"Randy made a mistake, pure and simple," Snodgrass says. "But Randy is not a bad kid. (Before the fight) Randy was never a problem in school, he was never sent from a classroom for discipline problems.

"Randy is an intelligent young man who knows what he wants from life. And, hopefully, he has learned a lesson that will stop him from that five-second decision down the road that might cost him a lifetime of trouble."

Moss, a doting father of a 2-year-old daughter who lives with her mother in the Charleston area, has gotten help in that effort to grow from DiPiero. "He's turned my whole life around," Moss says.

DiPiero, who is white, introduced Moss to several black former

EDITOR'S NOTE

As this magazine went to press in mid-May, Randy Moss' status for the 1996 season was unclear. While he was serving the rest of his jail sentence stemming from his role in the beating of the Dupont High student, Moss failed a drug test. His work-release privilege was revoked, and a hearing was set to determine what, if any, additional charges Moss would face because of the failed drug test. Florida State officials were waiting for the legal system to run its course before making a decision on Moss' future at the school.

college athletes in the Charleston area. One of those men helped Moss with his speaking and vocabulary. Another helped him with his posture and body language. All of them have shared their experiences of being prominent black athletes.

"They were able to talk to him in ways I couldn't," DiPiero says. "They could talk about how to handle racial slurs, how to communicate in public. And Randy's been very receptive."

Two months after the fight, Moss addressed a full house at the Victory Awards Banquet in Charleston, at which he accepted awards for being the state's best football and basketball player. In a firm, unhesitant speech, Moss apologized for the fight, said he was clearly wrong and announced, "I am ready to accept the consequences for my behavior."

His speech earned a standing ovation and elicited ringing endorsements from sports columnists throughout the state—including a few who previously had criticized Moss.

"I think Randy is sincere in his remorse," DiPiero says. "He wants to prove to his mother and his little girl that he can rise above what happened."

He will have that opportunity on the football field this fall. He knows that The Fight will be his calling card for several years to come. But he knows the only way to combat it is to show himself to be the person and athlete he believes he is.

"I'm not a thug. I'm a guy who made a mistake," Moss says. "Once I start playing ball, people can call me whatever they want.

"Once I start playing, I'll be living my dream."

Gerald Ensley is a reporter and columnist for the Tallahassee (Fla.) Democrat.

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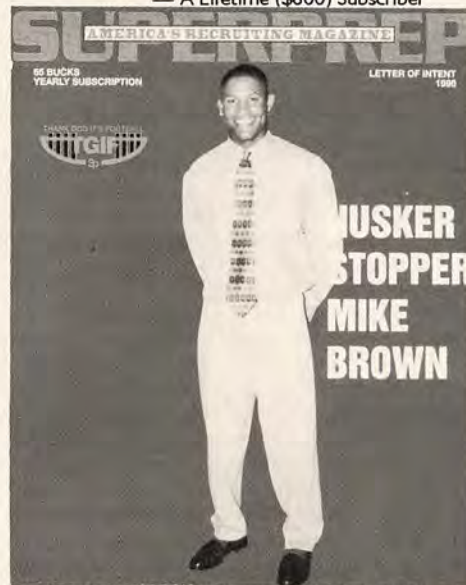
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The executive director of the Carquest Bowl can think of many reasons the Bowl Alliance's first year wasn't quite the smashing success everyone envisioned. In fact, Brian Flajole has more than 40,000 reasons. Although NCAA Division I-A muckamucks reveled in the good fortune of landing the nation's two top teams in the 1996 Fiesta Bowl, Flajole was left with table scraps. The Carquest's matchup between North Carolina and Arkansas was better suited for the basketball court than the football field and attracted only 34,428 fans to 74,916-seat Joe Robbie Stadium in Miami. By game's end, Flajole was wondering if future Carquests would need to add a weekend festival or postgame rock concert to survive. Coming soon: Bowlapalooza.

College football's latest attempt to determine a champion without a dreaded playoff system might actually be the first step toward killing the bowls the sport was trying to preserve. Instead of creating excitement for every postseason game, the top-heavy Alliance sucked all of the season's drama into the Fiesta's vortex. Yes, each week of the regular season brought us a little closer to the coveted No. 1-vs.-No. 2 colossus in Tempe, Ariz., but it also relegated the 17 bowl games played December 25-January 1 to junior-varsity status.

In the past, every bowl was part of a holiday brotherhood, even though the New Year's Day games clearly had a special bond. The Alliance has split that fraternity into two distinct postseason castes—Tier One and everybody else—and thereby made it quite

New Year's Day, formerly one of man's greatest leisure-time inventions, was reduced to a second-rate collection of gridiron pap. Admit it—the beer didn't taste as good, the kids didn't leave you alone as long and the games largely were devoid of suspense. That Syracuse-Clemson mismatch in the Gator Bowl was over well before anyone could discern which orange-clad team was which. Instead of the day building to a great football crescendo, six pointless contests fizzled for 13 hours. If Northwestern hadn't lifted the Rose Bowl to its best rating in 10 years, January 1 might have been a complete bust. And the folks in Pasadena had better not count on using a surprise season by Purdue or Minnesota to support next year's game. Cinderella doesn't beat Michigan and Penn State every year.

Even Notre Dame, as close to a guaranteed network meal ticket as exists in sports, couldn't save the day. The Irish's Orange Bowl matchup with Florida State pulled only a 12.5 share—down 58 percent from the Orange's 1995 number—despite being the only game televised in prime time. Florida State, which had made previous bowl tickets available only to its largest athletic donors, had to throw sales open to the *hoi polloi* and still couldn't sell out its allotment.

In New Orleans, the Sugar Bowl attracted even less attention than its pulpy counterpart. Even though the Superdome contest on New Year's Eve was well-attended, Virginia Tech's 28-10 whipping of Texas drew only a 6.3 rating, down 60 percent from the previous year. It's easy to see why the Orange Bowl and CBS are trying to escape their scheduled December 30 trap this year.

Of course, the network people can explain everything. The poor Orange numbers were caused by an engorged Rose Bowl, which ran 45 minutes late. After the Rose ended, the Orange got a 14

A Crack in the

clear that some bowls are more equal than others.

"There is a sense that interest in many of the bowls is waning," Flajole said. "The one-vs.-two game has had a ripple effect that a lot of us didn't expect.

"We're all feeling the big-game mentality of the fan. The other games don't matter as much. In a sense, conference commissioners and A.D.s are trying to get the best of both worlds: They're trying to get as much money out of the system as they can and keep the bowl system intact. That may not be possible."

Things figure to get worse. Once the current three-year Alliance contract expires after the 1997 season, I-A executives will throw open the bidding for the title game to every city with a warm climate or a domed stadium. By the time conferences are done collecting all the chamber-of-commerce freebies (hotel rooms, meals, stadium use) and TV bucks, Art Modell may threaten to move his Baltimore team to the SEC. Those unfortunate enough to be excluded from the next Tier One grouping will face an even tougher financial climate and a further erosion of interest.

The Alliance already has done away with those three weeks in November when grown men wearing cartoon-colored blazers and perpetual tans haunted press boxes and hospitality suites, trying to lure the most attractive teams to their bowls. Thanks to predetermined matchups involving specific conference finishers, the time-honored—and somewhat sleazy—suspense of which school would choose which jacket was eradicated from the college football landscape. Unlike college basketball, which generates tremendous anticipation for its 64-team tourney during the regular season and actually can support half-hour and hourlong shows announcing the pairings, the Alliance directed a season's worth of enthusiasm toward the Fiesta Bowl and turned everything else into a football version of the NIT.

The results were empty seats, hit-or-miss TV ratings, vanishing sponsors and some awful matchups. CBS may have promised givebacks to advertisers when the Fiesta Bowl didn't reach the magic Nielsen rating figure (24), but nobody mentioned compensation for the rest of us, who struggled to stay alert during a week of meaningless football.

rating, according to CBS executive Len DeLuca. The Sugar Bowl was hurt by its December 31 broadcast spot and the pairing of two Southern teams. Excuses, excuses. Then again, what can you expect from guys still trying to convince us that figure skating is a sport and not a Las Vegas revue? One can understand the need for rationalizations. After the networks paid \$16 million in 1994 for the broadcast rights to the three Tier One games, ABC and CBS combined to spend \$36 million last season. You can bet Maalox on the rocks was the drink of choice at alphabet headquarters during the week of January 2.

At least the Sugar and Orange bowls will get their chance at prime time during the next two seasons. Consider the fate of the Cotton Bowl, which last year lost its corporate sponsor, Mobil, after it became clear the game wouldn't be included in the Alliance's first tier. Only 58,214 (10,000 less than capacity) paid—even fewer showed up—to watch a Colorado-Oregon game noteworthy only for the Ducks' hideous uniforms and the decision by Buffaloes coach Rick Neuheisel to call a fourth-quarter fake punt with his team up by four touchdowns. Granted, the Southwest Conference's slow death had been hurting the Cotton Bowl for years, but the Alliance has emasculated the once-proud contest. If a *Fortune* 500 marketing executive doesn't deliver some funds pretty soon, the 60-year-old game, once a mainstay of New Year's Day, could find itself on the postseason bread line, thanks to a steady diet of games pairing Pacific-10 and Big 12 runners-up. How does Washington-Kansas State strike you for next season? Or maybe Arizona-Baylor? They're a long way from the Notre Dame-Texas showdowns of the 1970s.

The Cotton Bowl isn't the only victim of the sponsorship migration. The Sun Bowl lost its benefactor, John Hancock, before its 1995 game. Also, Weiser Lock ended its four-year relationship with the Copper Bowl after Texas Tech's 55-41 lashing of Air Force in December. Then there is the semiannual benefactor *do-si-do*. The Carquest Bowl once was the Blockbuster Bowl, the Plymouth Holiday used to be sponsored by Sea World, USF&G was the former Sugar daddy and the Fiesta Bowl shifted from computer (IBM) to snack (Tostitos) as its sponsor for the '96 contest.



Bowl arrangement takes on the look of an unholy alliance as 1-against-2 matchup removes the luster from other games

Vendors should be hawking annual reports, not programs, at these games.

Whatever they sell, bowl organizers can save on printing costs, thanks to dwindling attendance figures. Joining the Carquest and Cotton bowls in the wide-open spaces department were the Gator Bowl, which attracted only 45,202 to a 70,000-plus seat stadium, and the Copper Bowl, which fell 16,000 fans short of filling Arizona Stadium. Other bowls played in front of thousands of empty seats included the Liberty, Holiday and Aloha.

Two factors contributed to the smaller crowds and should have even greater impacts this year: slotting and conference championship games.

Slotting, a practice by which conferences guarantee their teams will have postseason dates (and paychecks) and bowls get to choose the most attractive participants from leagues, has drained much of the mystery out of the entire bowl process. Everybody knows the Carquest will pit the fourth choice from the ACC against the fifth from SEC qualifiers (six or more victories). The Aloha features the Big 12's fifth finisher against the Pac-10's fourth. And so on. Only the Liberty, Independence and newly formed Haka bowls have at-large spots available. In many cases, slotting created matchups that generated little national TV appeal and not enough regional interest to make the locals buy tickets.

More trouble looms. With the Big 12 and WAC joining the SEC this year by introducing conference playoff games, fans from six schools will have to decide whether to attend league title games and/or bowls. Last season, only 4,000 Arkansas fans traveled to

Miami for the Carquest, which was held just four weeks after the Razorbacks were crushed by Florida in the SEC championship game in Atlanta. The Hogs could have played in the Peach Bowl, but Arkansas Athletic Director Frank Broyles didn't want to return to the Georgia Dome so soon after the 34-3 loss to Florida. Remind Peach Bowl executive director Robert Dale Morgan to send Broyles a basket of fruit. When Arkansas passed on Atlanta, Morgan's game was able to select Georgia and fill the Dome with tens of thousands of Bulldog zealots. If the Big Ten and Big East ever expand enough to play intramural title games, even more bowls would be hurt.

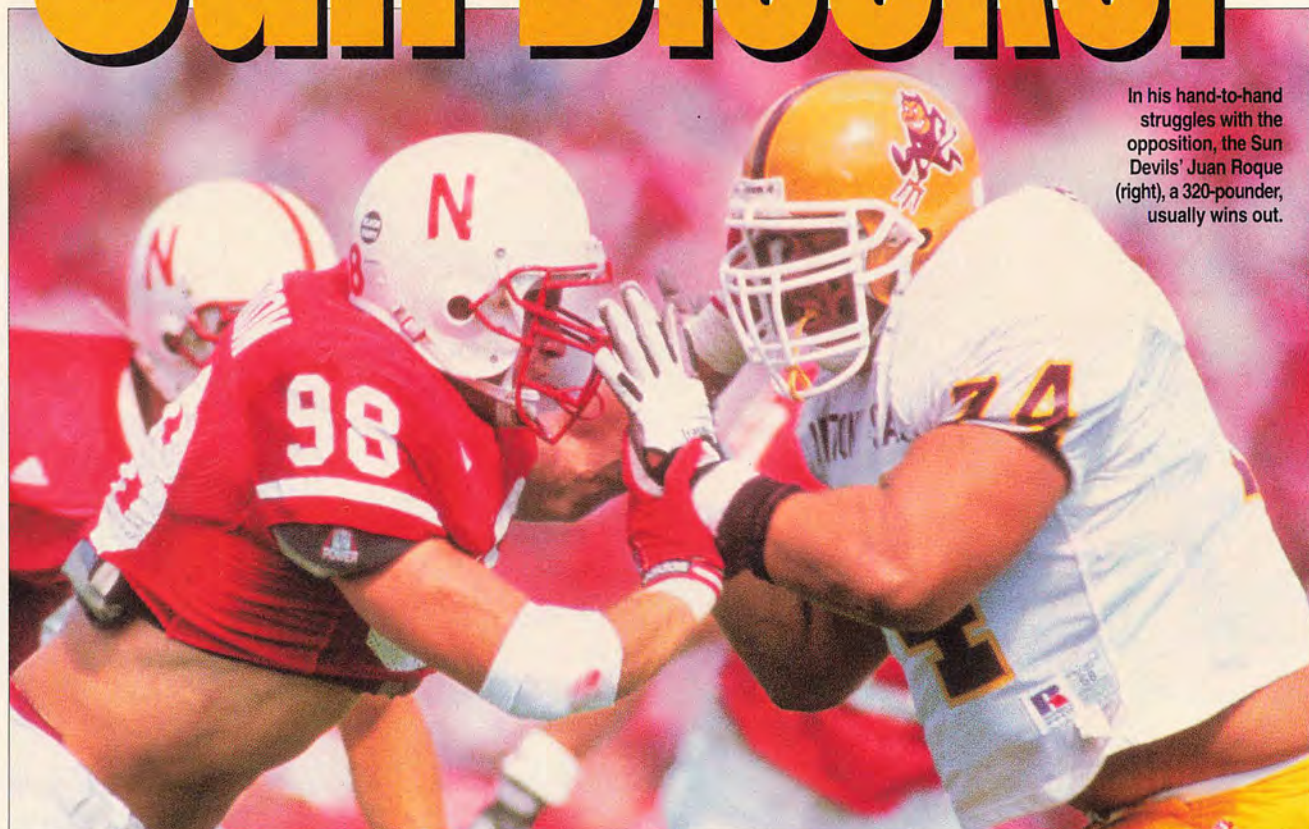
As the Carquest and its small-time brethren peer into the Tier One clubhouse, they cling to a sliver of hope for future membership. Each game, no matter how small, will get a chance to pitch for one of the coveted top spots in the next Alliance. Maybe one of the less-glamorous bowls will be lucky enough to land a spot in the next championship-game rotation. That's what they're telling their sponsors and communities. The chill of ugly matchups and empty seats could be replaced by the glow of nationwide attention surrounding the one-versus-two dream game.

It could happen. Really. If it doesn't, that rock-concert idea doesn't sound so bad. Either way, perhaps we should all be a little wary of what we wish for in the future. Yes, we've come up with a method to determine a national champion; no, we didn't want that to occur at the expense of the bowls.

Gosh, those college football muckamucks might have gone and mucked up everything.

Michael Bradley is a free-lance writer based in Philadelphia.

Sun Blocker



In his hand-to-hand struggles with the opposition, the Sun Devils' Juan Roque (right), a 320-pounder, usually wins out.

STEPHEN DUNN / ALLSPORT

Huge Juan Roque, perhaps football's next Anthony Munoz, eclipses Arizona State rivals with his fierce play along the offensive line

BY BOB EGER

From the beginning, size has had an impact on Juan Roque's life.

If he hadn't been an unusually large baby—12 pounds—his family might never have left its native Mexico for the United States.

If he hadn't been a chubby youngster, he might not have received the taunts that motivated him to make something out of himself.

And if he hadn't kept growing and growing, he surely wouldn't have developed into one of the premier offensive tackles in college football.

Roque, a 6-8, 320-pound senior, will man the critical left tackle position for Arizona State this season and is a major reason the Sun Devils are poised to contend for their first Pac-10 title since 1986. Roque is ASU's most celebrated offensive lineman since Randall McDaniel, a consensus All-American in 1987 and a first-round NFL draft choice. Roque follows on the heels of two highly visible Pac-10 offensive tackles of recent vintage: USC's Tony Boselli in 1994 and

UCLA's Jonathan Ogden last season.

Is Roque (pronounced Row-KAY) in the same class as Boselli and Ogden, both top-five NFL draft picks?

"Absolutely," Arizona State coach Bruce Snyder said. "Our memory of Boselli and Ogden is as seniors. Juan hasn't had the opportunity to be a senior yet, but I think he's going to have a wonderful year. He's definitely in that same category."

For his part, Roque said there is a difference between him and those former All-Americans: "They're great players, but I think I play meaner than they do."

Roque's family hails from Aguascalientes, a town of about 440,000 in central Mexico. "My mom came to the United States to have me," Roque said. "She was really big from her pregnancy and she didn't want to give birth in Mexico out of fear that something could go wrong. She was referred to San Diego State, and that's where I was born, at University Hospital in San Diego."

Shortly after Juan's birth, the family returned to Mexico, where it remained until he was 4. The Roques later moved briefly to the San Diego area before settling permanently in Ontario, east of Los Angeles.

All the while the family was moving, Juan was growing. As a 6-

year-old first-grader, Roque was 5-4 and 105 pounds—and taller than his 5-1 teacher. By the time he was 12, Roque was 5-7 and weighed 165 pounds.

"I was a fat kid," he said. "From about the age of 9 to 13, I was really chunky. The other kids used to make fun of me. Then, when I was about 15, I just started growing and growing and growing."

As a high school freshman, Roque was 6-2 and 190; as a sophomore, he was 6-6, 195. "I went from being chunky to being real thin," he said. "That's why I like weighing 320 now—I got a complex (then) about being skinny."

By his senior season, Roque was 6-8, 235, and had become a hot property with college recruiters. He visited Nebraska and was pursued by most Pac-10 schools.

Midway through the recruiting process, Snyder left California—Roque's early favorite—for Arizona State.

"I was going to go to Cal because I really liked Coach Snyder," Roque said. "Then the news came out that he was gone. I turned around and told USC, 'OK, I'm going to go with you.'"

"I was set. I canceled a trip to Washington. I bought a USC sweatshirt and a USC hat. I considered myself a Trojan."

A few days later, as Roque was standing in line at Ontario High waiting to register for his final semester, he felt a tap on his shoulder. It was Sun Devils defensive line coach Rod Marinelli, who had made the move with Snyder from Cal. Marinelli was accompanied by Ronnie Cox, then ASU's recruiting coordinator.

"They asked me if I'd like to visit ASU," Roque said. "I was thinking, 'The desert? No way. How could anybody survive out there?'"

But Roque's high school coach, Steve Johnston, suggested he take the trip. "He felt I would grow up faster if I went away to school," Roque said.

Roque said he was stunned when he flew into Phoenix and visited the Arizona State campus in nearby Tempe. "I had no idea what Phoenix looked like," he said. "I had taken a trip to Nebraska. That's what I had envisioned—something like Nebraska but surrounded by cactus."

"I remember getting off the plane and saying, 'This is beautiful.' It was a calm setting, and that really appealed to me. USC, like they say, is in the middle of a war zone. Berkeley is kind of weird, kind of strange. This place seemed to have it all."

Roque committed to ASU during his visit. He said then-USC coach Larry Smith did not take the news well.

"Larry Smith gave me a doom prediction," Roque said. "He told me I wouldn't last six months here, that I was a mama's boy, that I was spoiled. He said, 'You're going to be crying for your mommy within six months.'"

While Roque was recruited as a defensive lineman, Dan Cozzetto, ASU's offensive coordinator and offensive line coach, had his eye on Roque from the opening day of preseason drills in 1992. Roque said

OFFENSE

Pos.	Name	Ht./Wt.	Cl.	School
WR	Marcus Harris	6-2/214	Sr.	Wyoming
WR	Ike Hilliard	5-11/182	Jr.	Florida
TE	Kris Mangum	6-4/240	Sr.	Mississippi
T	Juan Roque	6-8/320	Sr.	Arizona State
T	Orlando Pace	6-6/320	Jr.	Ohio State
G	Chris Naeole	6-4/295	Sr.	Colorado
G	Dan Neil	6-2/285	Sr.	Texas
C	K.C. Jones	6-2/261	Sr.	Miami
QB	Peyton Manning	6-5/215	Jr.	Tennessee
RB	Warrick Dunn	5-11/185	Sr.	Florida State
RB	George Jones	5-9/210	Sr.	San Diego State
K	Rafael Garcia	5-11/195	Sr.	Virginia

he remembers Cozzetto looking across the line of scrimmage and flashing his Uncle Sam smile: Sooner or later, we're going to get you. "The way he was smiling at me, I knew it was just a matter of time before they moved me to offense," Roque said. "Sure enough, they made the move about two weeks later."

The move to offense invited comparisons to another former offensive lineman from Ontario—Anthony Munoz, the former USC star and All-Pro tackle considered by many to be the best Hispanic football player ever.

"I really didn't know who he was until I went to high school and got my number, 78, which was his number," Roque said. "Then I started to pay attention to him, mainly because of his Spanish surname and the fact that he was from Ontario."

As a redshirt freshman in 1993, Roque saw spot duty on the offensive line. He started eight games at left guard and two at right tackle as a sophomore before moving permanently to left tackle as a junior after the graduation of Jeff Kysar, a fifth-round pick of the Raiders.

"He was exposed to the battlefield quite early at several spots," Cozzetto said. "It was good to finally lock him into a position where he can develop his last two years."

Roque, an all-conference selection last season, admits to experiencing some growing pains as he attempted to master blocking techniques.

"It was frustrating at times," he said. "I would see Jeff Kysar blocking beautifully and I would say, 'Why can't I do that? I'm just as athletic as he is. I'm stronger than he is. I'm faster than he is.' I had to learn that I can't be comparing myself to anybody else. I have to worry about how Juan is doing."

Snyder and Cozzetto agree that Roque's attitude and work ethic overshadow his impressive physical attributes.

"Juan takes tremendous pride in everything he does, whether it's his appearance or his schoolwork or his work out on the

field," Cozzetto said.

A source of considerable pride for Roque is his ability to protect quarterback Jake Plummer, the triggerman in what promises to be a high-powered ASU offense.

"We can't let Jake get hit," Roque said. "He controls the ball, he controls the offense, he controls the game. If our main gun isn't working, we're not going to function."

"I'm the blind-side protector. I take a lot of pride in that. I tell Jake before every game, 'You're not going to get hit from my side. Not on my watch. It won't happen.'"

For 10 games last season, it didn't happen. Roque didn't allow a sack until All-American Tedy Bruschi of Arizona beat him for 1½ sacks in the final game.

For all the improvement Roque has made on the field, he also has made giant strides in the classroom. Though he admits he "goofed around a little" early in his college career, he graduated in May with a degree in Latin American history. He will play this fall as a graduate student.

"I'm proud of my roots," he said. "I've traveled some in Mexico, visiting the Mayan settings and some of the other historic sites. I think if more Hispanics had an opportunity to do something like that, they would have more pride in who they are."

Roque speaks frequently at inner-city schools, where he urges youngsters, particularly minorities, to stay in school and work to fulfill their dreams.

"I tell them I'm the classic example that it can be done," he said. "When I was young, people were always telling me I wouldn't go to college, I wouldn't play sports. You just have to find it inside yourself to get it done."

"If just one kid listens and takes it to heart, then it's all worthwhile. You can't save them all—that's a reality. But if you reach just one, he might reach somebody else. Eventually the numbers get bigger and bigger."

Just like Juan Roque. ♦

Bob Eger covers Arizona State for the Arizona Republic in Phoenix.

Home Improvement

With Cornell Brown hammering away, Hokies nail down status as a program clearly on the rise

BY SKIP WOOD

Given the choice between a luxury home and one of those handyman specials, high school All-America Cornell Brown happily reached for his hammer.

Now, four years later, Virginia Tech enters the season shooting for its fourth consecutive bowl appearance after a nifty Independence-to-Gator-to-Sugar progression. If Brown were a high school senior today, though, he'd find such accomplishments most unappealing and probably would take his pass-rushing talents elsewhere. As it was, the school that hadn't been to a bowl in six years and had finished 2-8-1 the previous season struck Brown as his dream house.

"What I wanted to do was something in the image of Chris Slade and Terry Kirby," Brown said of the former University of Virginia standouts who opted to play collegiately in their home state instead of bolting for national powers. "They helped build that program, and that's what I wanted to be a part of here at Virginia Tech."

Virginia Tech—27-9 since Brown arrived from Lynchburg (Va.) E.C. Glass High—might not be the House That Brown Built, but the senior defensive end has done much to send its property value soaring.

Hokies coach Frank Beamer has his own way of appraising Brown's contributions. While traveling from Blacksburg, Va., to Richmond last winter, Beamer searched for—and found—the perfect words to describe No. 58. En route to a banquet where Brown would accept the Dudley Award as the state's top college football player, Beamer knew he would be

Cornell Brown tries to close another deal for Virginia Tech, which is 27-9 since his arrival.



ALLEN KEE/BOB ROSATO SPORT PHOTOGRAPHY

asked to crystallize Brown's impact on the Hokies' program.

Beamer wanted something new and refreshing. And when it popped into his head, he wondered why he hadn't thought of it before: *Deal closer.*

"Cornell can be the difference between second-and-4 and second-and-14," Beamer said. "He's the guy who lets us close the deal."

Beamer had plenty of opportunities to convey his message in the next couple of months. It seemed like everywhere he turned, Brown was accepting this award or that award, and there also was the matter of that weeklong run of pre-Sugar Bowl press briefings in New Orleans.

Brown finished last season with 14 sacks (he has 28 in three years) and 25 tackles behind the line of scrimmage. This, despite a steady diet of double-team sandwiches that enabled teammates such as tackle J.C. Price to draw a bead on quarterbacks.

When the season ended, many wondered if Brown's career as a Hokie had ended, as well. After all, he was a consensus All-American and the Big East Conference's Player of the Year.

And, of course, there was the Sugar Bowl. Except for a national title, what would be left for Brown to accomplish as a senior?

Brown watched older brother Ruben, a former star at the University of Pittsburgh, enjoy a superb rookie season as an offensive lineman for the Buffalo Bills—and that's one of the main reasons Cornell stayed put. His family, Cornell included, already was able to benefit from Ruben's NFL paychecks. So, much to the relief of many Hokies coaches, players and fans, Cornell Brown decided to stick around.

"I was going to support Cornell on whatever he did," Ruben said. "I'm real proud of him—he's a young man who's got his head on straight."

Brown enters the 1996 season wondering if he has done all he can to secure a good standing in the NFL draft. Because of his size (6-2, 246 pounds), Brown believes his pro future lies at linebacker and fears teams will be wary of using a high pick on someone who never has played the position. Also, Brown plays his end position from a down stance.

"Nobody has seen me play 'up,' and that's a big question everybody has," he said. "I don't know that for a fact, because I'm obviously not on the inside, but from what I've seen—and I'm someone who follows the game very closely—I just know that's going to be a liability for me."

Maybe. Maybe not. "It's totally premature to worry about where a junior is going to go in the draft, and he needs to understand that," said draft expert Mel Kiper Jr., alluding to the concern that Brown expressed after the 1995 season. "Hey, some (NFL) teams use players differently than other teams. And he still has his senior season—that's the thing."

Unbridled passion seems to fuel Brown's game. When it kicks in, and meshes with his unusual quickness, Brown

DEFENSE

Pos.	Name	Ht./Wt.	Cl.	School
E	Cornell Brown	6-2/240	Sr.	Virginia Tech
T	Darrell Russell	6-4/320	Jr.	Southern California
E	Mike Vrabel	6-4/260	Sr.	Ohio State
OLB	Terrell Farley	6-1/205	Sr.	Nebraska
ILB	Matt Russell	6-2/245	Sr.	Colorado
ILB	Anthony Simmons	6-1/205	Soph.	Clemson
OLB	Keith Mitchell	6-3/223	Sr.	Texas A&M
CB	Kenny Wheaton	5-9/191	Jr.	Oregon
CB	Chris Canty	5-10/190	Jr.	Kansas State
FS	Mitchell Freedman	6-0/192	Soph.	Arizona State
SS	Kevin Jackson	6-1/200	Sr.	Alabama
P	Brad Maynard	6-1/175	Sr.	Ball State
KR	Derrick Mason	5-11/190	Sr.	Michigan State

goes from good to great in a hurry.

"There was just nothing we could do to stop him," West Virginia coach Don Nehlen said last season after watching Brown and the Hokies stifle the Mountaineers, 27-0. "I don't know how many plays he was in on, but it seemed like every one."

Brown was in on very few plays through three quarters of Virginia Tech's 1995 visit to Virginia. The Hokies trailed, 29-14, and appeared cooked. But if you listened closely, you could hear a strange sound invade Scott Stadium. It was Cornell, slowed by the flu, kicking in. Brown's two fourth-quarter sacks and five tackles helped secure a stunning 36-29 victory.

Several times during the rally, Brown punctuated tackles with spontaneous outbursts of dancing emotion. That's what he does, even during practice, but the celebrations always seem to wind down just as the official reaches for his flag.

Bruce Smith used to do the same thing, although Tech's 1984 Outland Trophy winner had more of an in-your-face celebratory step. Brown easily is the most noted Hokie since Smith, although he hates the comparisons. "How can you compare yourself to somebody like him, a superstar in the NFL?" Brown said. "To me, he's Mr. Smith."

Brown, seeking similar respect, says he will be focused in '96 as he chases his NFL dream. He has hinted that his days of switching padlocks on lockers, hiding helmets, swapping sweats and generally looking for laughs will be kept to a minimum this season.

The way Brown sees it, it's time to come of age. Heightened media coverage began to harden him a year ago, as did legal troubles for a couple of his best friends on the team. (A former student contends in a federal civil lawsuit that she was raped in the fall of 1994 by Tech players Tony Morrison and James Crawford in a dorm room while Brown

watched. But following a state police investigation, a grand jury in April declined to bring criminal charges against the players.) Brown's joy for the game still will be present, he says, but with a narrowed, on-field purpose.

"I'm older," Brown said. "I'm beginning to realize there's going to be a lot of young guys looking up to me, just like I used to look up to guys like (linebacker) Ken Brown and (receiver) Antonio Freeman."

"I remember looking at them and thinking, 'Dag, those guys run this team,' and I looked up to that. Now it's my turn."

Not that he won't return to a few of his old tricks. He remembers his freshman season, when teammates would lock his always-unlocked locker, knowing he hadn't bothered to remember the combination. He'd be late for practice, but even while running punishment laps he'd be glowing with the knowledge that gags meant acceptance.

"When you're a year out of high school, you need that," Brown said. "There's still going to be a few times when I do what it takes to make the freshmen feel 'comfortable.'"

As for Brown's own comfort zone, it likely will take a while for that to develop this season. Brown is the lone returning starter on the Hokies' defensive line, and he knows he'll be a weekly target of opponents' stop-the-stud sweepstakes.

"I know it'll be a challenge," he said, "but it's a challenge I'm already waiting for. The key for us will be putting guys (on the defensive line) who play well, not guys who are just kind of there. And I think we're going to do that and get right back up to the top and to the Sugar Bowl again."

That would mean playing for the national championship. In this season's Bowl Alliance pairings, the Sugar gets the first two picks.

"Exactly," Brown said.

Skip Wood covers Virginia Tech football for the Richmond (Va.) Times-Dispatch.

All-America

The Sporting News

QUARTERBACKS

1. Peyton Manning 6-2/215 Jr. Tennessee
2. Danny Wuerffel 6-2/209 Sr. Florida
3. Koy Detmer 6-1/185 Sr. Colorado
4. Jake Plummer 6-2/190 Sr. Arizona State
5. James Brown 6-0/186 Jr. Texas
6. Thad Busby 6-3/220 Jr. Florida State
7. Marcus Crandell 6-0/204 Sr. East Carolina
8. Ron Powlus 6-2/222 Jr. Notre Dame
9. Brannon Stewart 6-3/210 Jr. Texas A&M
10. Brad Otton 6-6/235 Sr. S. California
11. Wally Richardson 6-4/222 Sr. Penn State
12. Steve Sarkisian 6-2/210 Sr. Brigham Young
13. Daunte Culpepper 6-4/230 Soph. Central Florida
14. Pat Barnes 6-4/210 Sr. California
15. Ryan Clement 6-2/200 Jr. Miami
16. Matt Sherman 6-3/207 Jr. Iowa
17. Cory Sauter 6-5/214 Jr. Minnesota
18. Jim Druckenmiller 6-5/223 Sr. Virginia Tech
19. Charlie Batch 6-2/210 Sr. Eastern Michigan
20. Chuck Clements 6-3/200 Sr. Houston

WIDE RECEIVERS

1. Marcus Harris 6-2/214 Sr. Wyoming
2. Ike Hilliard 5-11/182 Jr. Florida
3. Mike Adams 6-1/187 Sr. Texas
4. Andre Cooper 6-2/194 Sr. Florida State
5. Will Blackwell 6-0/180 Jr. San Diego State
6. Rae Carruth 5-11/190 Sr. Colorado
7. Randy Moss 6-4/210 Fr. Florida State
8. Joey Kent 6-1/184 Sr. Tennessee
9. Keith Poole 6-2/185 Sr. Arizona State
10. Kevin Lockett 6-1/180 Sr. Kansas State
11. Na'il Benjamin 5-11/185 Sr. California
12. David Saunders 6-2/205 Soph. West Virginia
13. Reidel Anthony 5-11/176 Jr. Florida
14. Dedric Ward 5-9/179 Sr. Northern Iowa
15. Antwan Wyatt 5-11/190 Sr. Clemson
16. Kobie Jenkins 6-3/202 Sr. Alcorn State
17. D'Wayne Bates 6-2/208 Jr. Northwestern
18. Ryan Thelwell 6-2/180 Jr. Minnesota
19. Chad Mackey 6-2/190 Sr. Louisiana Tech
20. Brian Roberson 5-10/170 Sr. Fresno State

ALL-PURPOSE QUARTERBACKS

1. Donovan McNabb 6-1/208 Soph. Syracuse
2. Zebbie Lethridge 6-0/195 Jr. Texas Tech
3. Tony Graziani 6-3/200 Sr. Oregon
4. Dameyune Craig 6-1/185 Jr. Auburn
5. Scott Frost 6-3/215 Jr. Nebraska
6. Beau Morgan 5-11/187 Sr. Air Force
7. Ramon Flanigan 6-2/175 Sr. SMU
8. Nealon Greene 5-11/190 Jr. Clemson
9. Donald Sellers 6-1/180 Sr. New Mexico
10. Ryan Huzjak 6-2/193 Sr. Toledo

TIGHT ENDS

1. Kris Mangum 6-5/240 Sr. Mississippi
2. Chad Lewis 6-6/235 Sr. BYU
3. Stephen Alexander 6-4/225 Jr. Oklahoma
4. Pat Fitzgerald 6-2/225 Sr. Texas
5. Josh Wilcox 6-3/251 Sr. Oregon
6. Tony Gonzalez 6-6/235 Jr. California
7. David LaFleur 6-7/279 Sr. LSU
8. Ed Perry 6-5/240 Sr. James Madison
9. Keith Olsson 6-4/248 Sr. Penn State
10. Matt Lepsis 6-5/265 Sr. Colorado

RUNNING BACKS

1. Warrick Dunn 5-9/178 Sr. Florida State
2. George Jones 5-9/210 Sr. San Diego State
3. Troy Davis 5-8/190 Jr. Iowa State
4. Ahman Green 6-0/210 Soph. Nebraska
5. Jerod Douglas 5-9/173 Jr. Baylor
6. Kevin Faulk 5-10/192 Soph. LSU
7. Byron Hanspard 6-0/190 Jr. Texas Tech
8. Darnell Autry 5-11/209 Jr. Northwestern
9. Tiki Barber 5-10/195 Sr. Virginia
10. Jay Graham 6-0/206 Sr. Tennessee
11. Raymond Priestler 6-1/220 Jr. Clemson
12. Leon Johnson 6-1/210 Sr. North Carolina
13. Robert Edwards 6-2/208 Jr. Georgia
14. Sedrick Shaw 6-1/195 Sr. Iowa
15. Curtis Enis 6-1/231 Soph. Penn State
16. Rashaan Shehee 5-11/200 Jr. Washington
17. Wasean Tait 5-8/175 Sr. Toledo
18. Madre Hill 6-1/193 Jr. Arkansas
19. Shon Mitchell 5-10/185 Sr. Texas
20. Billy West 5-10/205 Jr. Pitt
21. Danyell Ferguson 6-0/200 Sr. Miami
22. C.J. Williams 6-1/202 Jr. Georgia Tech
23. Tremayne Stephens 5-11/187 Jr. N.C. State
24. Charles Talley 6-0/229 Sr. Northern Illinois
25. Alex Smith 6-0/205 Jr. Indiana

OFFENSIVE TACKLES

1. Orlando Pace 6-6/320 Jr. Ohio State
2. Juan Roque 6-8/320 Sr. Arizona State
3. Eric Anderson 6-4/300 Jr. Nebraska
4. Tarik Glenn 6-6/345 Sr. California
5. David Davis 6-4/308 Sr. Baylor
6. Jerry Wunsch 6-6/315 Sr. Wisconsin
7. Mike Doughty 6-8/313 Sr. Notre Dame
8. Flozell Adams 6-7/335 Jr. Michigan State
9. Tim Kohn 6-5/307 Sr. Iowa State
10. Curtis McGee 6-5/285 Sr. Georgia Tech

GUARDS

1. Chris Naeole 6-4/295 Sr. Colorado
2. Dan Neil 6-2/285 Sr. Texas
3. Chris Dishman 6-3/310 Sr. Nebraska
4. Donnie Young 6-4/299 Sr. Florida
5. Calvin Collins 6-3/290 Sr. Texas A&M
6. LeShun Daniels 6-2/285 Sr. Ohio State
7. Brad Badger 6-4/280 Sr. Stanford
8. Benji Olson 6-4/300 Soph. Washington
9. Mark Nori 6-4/294 Sr. Boston College
10. Jamie Vanderveldt 6-5/305 Sr. Wisconsin

CENTERS

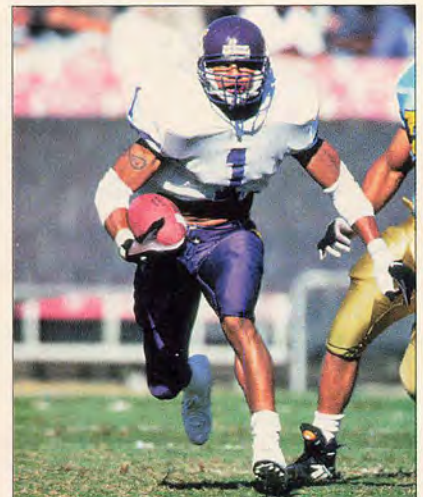
1. K.C. Jones 6-2/261 Sr. Miami
2. Aaron Taylor 6-1/305 Jr. Nebraska
3. Rod Payne 6-4/285 Sr. Michigan
4. Jeff Mitchell 6-4/285 Sr. Florida
5. Ryan Tucker 6-6/290 Sr. TCU
6. Billy Conaty 6-3/306 Sr. Virginia Tech
7. Juan Porter 6-4/290 Sr. Ohio State
8. Don Struebing 6-2/305 Sr. Central Arkansas
9. Brandon Turner 6-3/283 Sr. New Mexico
10. John Causey 6-2/262 Sr. Alabama

FULLBACKS

1. Ricky Williams 6-0/225 Soph. Texas
2. Marc Edwards 6-0/237 Sr. Notre Dame
3. Rob Konrad 6-3/230 Soph. Syracuse
4. Emory Smith 6-0/235 Sr. Clemson
5. C. Fuamatu-Ma'afala 6-1/272 Soph. Utah



TEXAS TECH QB ZEBBIE LETHRIDGE



WASHINGTON RB RASHAAN SHEHEE

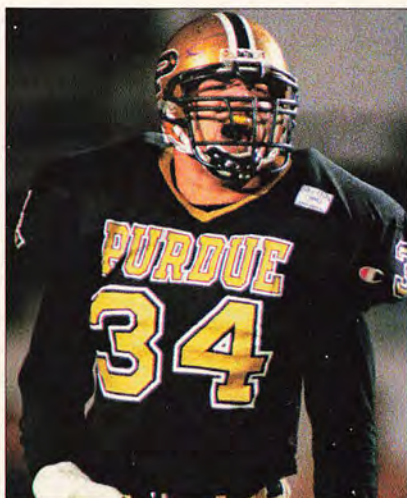


FLORIDA WR IKE HILLIARD

RANKINGS



TEXAS A&M DE BRANDON MITCHELL



PURDUE OLB CHIKE OKEAFOR



MICHIGAN STATE KR DERRICK MASON

DEFENSIVE ENDS

1. Cornell Brown	6-2/240	Sr.	Virginia Tech
2. Mike Vrabel	6-4/260	Sr.	Ohio State
3. Brandon Mitchell	6-4/275	Sr.	Texas A&M
4. Leonard Little	6-3/230	Jr.	Tennessee
5. Grant Wistrom	6-5/250	Jr.	Nebraska
6. Greg Ellis	6-6/260	Jr.	North Carolina
7. Jared Tomich	6-2/260	Sr.	Nebraska
8. Greg Jones	6-4/240	Sr.	Colorado
9. Darrell Blackburn	6-4/224	Sr.	Alabama
10. Tarek Saleh	6-3/236	Sr.	Wisconsin
11. Reinard Wilson	6-2/245	Sr.	Florida State
12. Kenard Lang	6-4/251	Jr.	Miami
13. Matt Finkes	6-2/260	Sr.	Ohio State
14. Nyle Wiren	6-1/250	Sr.	Kansas State
15. Renaldo Wynn	6-3/275	Sr.	Notre Dame
16. Kenny Holmes	6-4/247	Sr.	Miami
17. Andy Jacobs	6-4/255	Sr.	California
18. Ryan Phillips	6-3/243	Sr.	Idaho
19. Kendrick Gholston	6-3/249	Jr.	Louisville
20. Mark Schmidt	6-3/296	Sr.	Oregon

DEFENSIVE TACKLES/ NOSE TACKLES

1. Darrell Russell	6-4/320	Jr.	USC
2. Chris Akins (NT)	6-1/292	Jr.	Texas
3. Chuck Wiley	6-4/274	Jr.	LSU
4. Joe Salave'a	6-4/276	Sr.	Arizona
5. Billy Lyon	6-5/300	Sr.	Marshall
6. Jason Peter	6-4/285	Jr.	Nebraska
7. William Carr	6-0/269	Sr.	Michigan
8. Brandon Whiting	6-3/280	Jr.	California
9. James Grier	6-6/307	Jr.	Mississippi State
10. Edward Jasper (NT)	6-4/291	Sr.	Texas A&M

OUTSIDE LINEBACKERS

1. Terrell Farley	6-1/205	Sr.	Nebraska
2. Keith Mitchell	6-3/223	Sr.	Texas A&M
3. Brian Simmons	6-4/230	Jr.	North Carolina
4. Marcellus Mostella	6-3/235	Sr.	Auburn
5. Dwayne Rudd	6-2/232	Jr.	Alabama
6. Chike Okeafor	6-5/237	Jr.	Purdue
7. Jamie Sharper	6-3/238	Sr.	Virginia
8. Kory Minor	6-2/235	Soph.	Notre Dame
9. Jason Chorak	6-4/250	Jr.	Washington
10. Nate Hemsley	6-0/208	Sr.	Syracuse
11. Dee Osborne	6-2/215	Sr.	Miami (Ohio)
12. Derrick Barnes	6-1/252	Sr.	Oregon

INSIDE LINEBACKERS

1. Matt Russell	6-2/240	Sr.	Colorado
2. Anthony Simmons	6-1/205	Soph.	Clemson
3. Ink Aleaga	6-2/225	Sr.	Washington
4. Dwayne Curry	6-3/248	Sr.	Mississippi State
5. Daryl Bush	6-2/230	Jr.	Florida State
6. Jarrett Irons	6-1/231	Sr.	Michigan
7. Lyron Cobbins	6-0/246	Sr.	Notre Dame
8. Pat Fitzgerald	6-2/233	Sr.	Northwestern
9. Tyrus McCloud	6-2/251	Sr.	Louisville
10. Mark Smith	6-3/229	Sr.	Arkansas
11. Reggie Garnett	6-1/228	Sr.	Michigan State
12. Ron Rogers	6-1/230	Jr.	Georgia Tech
13. Tyrell Peters	6-0/210	Sr.	Oklahoma
14. Pete Monty	6-2/241	Sr.	Wisconsin
15. DeShone Myles	6-3/235	Jr.	Nevada
16. Chris Draft	6-1/220	Jr.	Stanford
17. Dexter Coakley	5-11/205	Sr.	Appalachian State
18. Shay Muirbrook	6-1/235	Sr.	BYU

CORNERBACKS

1. Chris Canty	5-10/190	Jr.	Kansas State
2. Kenny Wheaton	5-9/191	Jr.	Oregon
3. Bryant Westbrook	6-0/195	Sr.	Texas
4. Joe Gordon	5-9/180	Sr.	Kansas State
5. Ricky Parker	6-1/205	Sr.	San Diego State
6. Anthone Lott	5-9/192	Sr.	Florida
7. Ronde Barber	5-10/180	Jr.	Virginia
8. Deshea Townsend	5-10/170	Jr.	Alabama
9. Shawn Springs	6-0/185	Jr.	Ohio State
10. Brian Miller	5-9/186	Sr.	Penn State
11. Charles Woodson	6-1/192	Soph.	Michigan
12. Daylon McCutcheon	5-11/175	Soph.	USC
13. Kevin Abrams	5-8/158	Sr.	Syracuse
14. Sam Madison	5-11/174	Sr.	Louisville
15. Carlos Jones	5-11/173	Sr.	Miami

SAFETIES

1. Mitchell Freedman	6-0/192	Soph.	Arizona State
2. Kevin Jackson	6-1/200	Sr.	Alabama
3. Torrian Gray	6-0/200	Sr.	Virginia Tech
4. Chris Carter	6-1/200	Sr.	Texas
5. Zack Bronson	6-1/200	Sr.	McNeese State
6. Lawrence Wright	6-1/209	Sr.	Florida
7. Jason Parker	6-0/192	Sr.	Tennessee
8. Kim Herring	6-0/196	Sr.	Penn State
9. Donovan Darius	6-1/204	Jr.	Syracuse
10. Eric Collier	6-1/217	Sr.	Northwestern
11. Harold Lusk	6-0/193	Sr.	Utah
12. Abdul McCullough	6-0/202	Sr.	UCLA
13. Darren Sharper	6-3/215	Sr.	William & Mary
14. Quincy Wright	6-1/190	Sr.	Central Michigan
15. Sean Woodson	6-2/210	Sr.	Jackson State

KICKERS

1. Rafael Garcia	5-11/195	Sr.	Virginia
2. Phil Dawson	5-11/187	Jr.	Texas
3. Michael Reeder	6-0/162	Jr.	TCU
4. Jeremy Alexander	5-10/180	Jr.	Oklahoma
5. Remy Hamilton	6-0/193	Sr.	Michigan
6. Jeff Hall	6-0/182	Soph.	Tennessee
7. Brett Conway	6-2/188	Sr.	Penn State
8. Dan Pulsipher	6-1/175	Sr.	Utah
9. Eric Richards	5-8/160	Jr.	Cincinnati
10. David Ettinger	6-0/215	Sr.	Hofstra

PUNTERS

1. Brad Maynard	6-1/175	Sr.	Ball State
2. Bill Marinangel	6-2/215	Sr.	Vanderbilt
3. Sean Reali	5-10/192	Sr.	Syracuse
4. Tucker Phillips	6-2/210	Sr.	Rice
5. Toby Gowin	5-10/160	Sr.	North Texas
6. Marc Harris	5-11/202	Sr.	Iowa State
7. Nick Gallery	6-4/239	Sr.	Iowa
8. Nate Cochran	6-5/215	Sr.	Pitt
9. Will Brice	6-5/204	Sr.	Virginia
10. Sean Liss	6-4/220	Sr.	Florida State

RETURN MEN

1. Derrick Mason	5-11/190	Sr.	Michigan State
2. Robert Tate	5-10/190	Sr.	Cincinnati
3. Reidel Anthony	5-11/176	Jr.	Florida
4. Antwan Wyatt	5-11/190	Sr.	Clemson
5. Damon Dunn	5-10/175	Soph.	Stanford
6. James Dye	5-9/150	Sr.	BYU
7. Claude Mathis	5-9/180	Jr.	SW Texas State
8. Rahsaan Vanterpool	5-11/185	Sr.	West Virginia
9. Jim Turner	6-4/205	Jr.	Syracuse
10. Kio Sanford	5-11/169	Jr.	Kentucky

Taking Care of Business

By STEVE LOWERY

Ten 100-yard sprints.

It was George Jones' first workout at San Diego State, and he was doubled over, fighting for air.

A disappointment, Aztecs coaches thought. Jones thought otherwise. He knew the circuitous route—from a community child in Greenville, S.C., to a community college in Bakersfield, Calif.—he had taken to get this chance. He knew he would be all right.

Six weeks later, Jones rushed for 147 yards—which would be six below his season average—and three touchdowns in a 33-9 season-opening rout of California. And that was just the start. He finished the season with 1,842 yards, which was third in the nation, and broke Marshall Faulk's Western Athletic Conference single-season record. Only Ohio State's Eddie George scored more touchdowns than Jones—24 to 23. Oh, and Jones played the last three games of the season with a broken jaw, his mouth wired so tight that not only was eating a chore, but breathing as well.

A disappointment? Not even close.

"From within, man," Jones says. "It comes from within."

When Aztecs strength coach Dave Ohton came to work the Sunday following that disastrous first workout, he found Jones running on a field near the weightroom. From time to time, Ohton would emerge from the weightroom, casting an eye on the field and there would be Jones, running under the summer sun. Ohton began checking more frequently, each time expecting to find the field Jones-less. Each time Jones remained. Running. It went on for hours—four, to be exact.

This went on all season. Coaches were grateful for Jones' commitment, but there were times when his desire was almost unnerving, two exits past ferocious. But Jones knew no other way.

Born poor, he grew up in Greenville's toughest part, Eastside, where drug dealers could be found and gunshots could be heard. Jones slept where he found space, often in a crowded room. His parents? There is one ground rule when you talk to George Jones: There will be no questions about his par-

ents. Even Monnie Broome, who became sort of a surrogate father to Jones, avoids the subject.

"Whenever there was a picture day for one of the football teams, we noticed that there were never any parents with George," Broome says. "He never talked about it much; he's a very private person. But we started to notice that whenever he spent the night, he wouldn't call anyone. He would be with us for two or three days and he never called."

All of this instilled in Jones a tendency to handle problems one way—direct. So one day in Greenville, when someone pulled a gun and put it to the head of his best friend, Monnie Broome's son Nathan,

Jones ran straight at the guy, lifted him up and tossed him like a can of garbage. Just like when he broke his jaw in the second quarter against New Mexico, Jones "ran harder so I could deliver the blow."

Despite poverty and having revolving caretakers, he refused to be a victim. Even today, Jones becomes uneasy when talk veers too far from football, causing him to make broad, subject-ending declarations.

"I don't like to talk about it," he says. "You know, I could have asked, 'Why is my life like this?' But what's the point? I decided I wanted to get out, and I knew I was going to have to do it myself."

And so he became a self-made man at 12, working in the kitchen of a fish restaurant, sometimes until 2 a.m. The people at the restaurant thought Jones was older. He just needed the work.

He was back up at 7, getting bused to school in a middle-class neighborhood. After school, he lifted weights or played football, which he decided would be his salvation. The nights he didn't work, he went home to play more football with much older men late into the night.

"To be honest, those games kind of scared me," says Nathan, who occasionally participated at Jones' insistence. "I mean, these were men we were playing against, and they played for keeps. But George, he just wanted to play all the time."

Football was the constant. Jones watched it every Sunday, first idol-



JOHN WILLIAMSON

San Diego State standout George Jones, who had a rugged childhood in South Carolina, is a dedication-plus athlete.

izing Walter Payton, then Barry Sanders. For all their speed and moves, it was their power he admired—the ability of smaller men to deliver a blow and keep going. It's a style he adopted. Watching football convinced Jones of his destiny. He was poor, he was working and he was relatively small. People thought he was nuts.

"I just said, 'OK, we'll see who's nuts.'"

The weightlifting began. First it was with concrete dumbbells; then he was doing multiple presses of 400-plus pounds at health clubs. A George Jones workout was worth two of anyone else's. It had nothing to do with vanity. The purpose was not to impress but to improve.

"That's George," Aztecs offensive tackle Kyle Turley says. "In the weightroom, on the field, he's a businessman."

San Diego State's George Jones is one Aztec who creates a few ruins of his own

Jones could lift 250 pounds by the eighth grade. The following year, he was running the ball for Eastside High. Nathan played quarterback.

It is an unlikely friendship. Jones is black, Broome white. Jones is poverty-stricken, a quiet zealot. Broome is a middle-class kid of a textile executive, excitable to distraction.

But they both liked football, and that was enough of a start. Soon Jones was spending more and more time at the Broome's, staying late at their house, watching games on TV, going on trips. What Jones was given, he gave back. Nathan fed off Jones' drive. To this day, Nathan, who plays baseball at Clemson, calls Jones "to get my focus back."

Division I-A coaches took notice of the star at Eastside, but Jones' grades lagged, partly because he devoted so much time to football. He would have to go to junior college. A friend of a friend had gone out west, and he pointed Jones in the direction of Bakersfield (Calif.) Community College. Jones never had been out of the state or on a plane. The night before Jones was to leave, he balked.

"We went out to dinner that night, and it was obvious he was scared," Monnie Broome says. "He'd gotten a job in one of the textile plants and he was talking about sticking around, working in the plant and giving up football."

Monnie Broome, who had bought the airline ticket, had heard Jones and Nathan talk about football late into the night, and he noticed how Jones never took unnecessary risks with his body—such as water skiing—for fear of blowing everything. He spoke up.

"He told me I'd worked for this my whole life and that staying wasn't an option," Jones says. "I was really pretty frightened about leaving. I thought maybe I could be happy just staying and working. But he told me—he didn't ask, he *told* me—I was getting on that plane."

In his sophomore year at Bakersfield, Jones rushed for 1,567 yards and a junior college-record 34 touchdowns. Coaches came calling again. Bakersfield coach Carl Bowser contacted Aztecs coach Ted Tollner, his friend and former teammate at Cal Poly-SLO.

Other recruiters questioned why Jones would go to San Diego State, a program with a reputation as a passing school. But Tollner had the Faulk legacy on his side.

"We let him know that if he's the guy in a one-back offense, he's going to get his 25 carries a game, the way Marshall did, the way Thurman Thomas does at Buffalo," Tollner says.

Faulk slashes; Jones pounds. Jones isn't as fast as Faulk, but he is stronger. Jones' 455-pound bench press makes him one of the team's strongest players, regardless of position. Jones added 20 pounds of muscle last summer out of fear that his 5-9, 210-pound frame couldn't handle the pounding of major-college football. That extra weight was why Jones was wheezing after the first sprints he ran at San Diego State.

Jones rushed for 253 yards on 19 carries against San Jose State last year. One play showed everyone just how powerful he is.

"He's running toward the end zone and this linebacker is in his way and he straight-arms the guy and throws him about three yards," Ohton says. "I mean, he grabbed this guy, ran with him like he was a rag doll and then bench-pressed him into the end zone."

"The crowd cheered. But when they showed the replay and they saw what he actually had done, there was this gasp, like people were saying, 'Oh, my God!'"

The only disappointment from last year's 8-4 finish was that after Jones broke his jaw, the Aztecs lost two of their last three games, losing any chance for a WAC title.

"It was a very tough time for him," Tollner says. "He wasn't able to be quite as dominant and I know that bothered him, but George never once asked to come out. Playing was never an issue for him."

The only issue about playing this season is how soon it will start.

"I can't wait, man," he says. "I just feel like I'm going to blow up this year."

His goals: lead his team to a WAC title—"That's something Marshall never did"—be a high NFL draft choice and make a run at the Heisman.

LOST IN THE SHADOWS

There are a number of good college players who—because their team is bad, they play in a lesser conference or they are overshadowed by teammates—don't get the attention they deserve. Here are some of those players:

PLAYER	Ht./Wt.	CL.	SCHOOL
FB Rod Brown	6-0/232	Sr.	N.C. State
LB Michael Comer	5-9/260	Sr.	Texas-El Paso
FS DeMontie Cross	6-4/209	Sr.	Missouri
LB James Darling	6-1/245	Sr.	Washington State
DE Nate Davis	6-5/285	Sr.	Indiana
WR Richard Dice	6-2/216	Sr.	Arizona
WR Tim Dwight	5-9/170	Jr.	Iowa
CB Warrick Franklin	5-10/180	Sr.	Rice
FB Sam Games	6-4/215	Sr.	Cincinnati
LB David Gill	6-0/230	Sr.	Utah State
FS Cory Gilliard	6-1/204	Sr.	Ball State
OT Jay Hagood	6-4/307	Sr.	Virginia Tech
SS Daren Hart	5-10/195	Sr.	East Carolina
SS Rodney Heath	5-10/170	Sr.	Minnesota
C Jason Johnson	6-2/270	Sr.	Kansas State
CB Derek Jones	5-9/170	Sr.	Mississippi
SS Mike Minter	5-10/190	Sr.	Nebraska
QB Raymond Philyaw	5-10/212	Sr.	NE Louisiana
RB Marc Renaud	5-10/181	Jr.	Michigan State
FS Keith Spann	6-1/200	Sr.	Memphis
SS Omar Stoutmire	5-11/195	Sr.	Fresno State
QB Derrick Taite	6-4/194	Sr.	Mississippi State
RB David Thompson	5-8/200	Jr.	Oklahoma State
RB Astron Whatley	5-8/177	Jr.	Kent
WR Damond Wilkins	6-1/175	Sr.	Nevada

"I think winning the Heisman would validate all the risks he's taken," Nathan says. "He's the one who gave his life over to football. I think the Heisman would prove he made the right decisions."

The night Jones saved his life, Nathan Broome was too stunned to thank him. It was only later that he called his friend.

"George, you saved me."

No big deal, Jones said: "I got nothing to lose."

Today, there is everything to gain—everything he has worked for and was told he was crazy to even consider. Sitting in the San Diego State weightroom, clad in a baggy Clemson sweatshirt, he considers what his life could be like a year from now.

"I can't help it," he says. "I know my life is going to change in a year and I can't wait. I know I should enjoy (college) more, but I'm so focused on the NFL; I've got too much riding on this."

The dreamer gazes ahead. Sometimes, that's all there is.

"Without dreams, you got nothing," he says. "You got nothing." ♦

Steve Lowery is a free-lance writer based in Los Angeles.

Volatile offense in Knoxville

National title wouldn't be a waltz for Tennessee, but Peyton Manning and Jay Graham offer hope

BY MIKE STRANGE

If hard work leads to good things, well, Tennessee quarterback Peyton Manning expects great things this fall.

No one outworks Manning in the weight room or the video room, a work ethic he proudly admits he got from his famous dad. Indeed, before going home to New Orleans for some revelry at Mardi Gras in February,



Vols quarterback Peyton Manning and tailback Jay Graham (opposite page) have one piece of unfinished business to take care of in '96.

onship. And with Manning at quarterback and the record-setting Jay Graham at tailback, why not?

Manning, a 6-5, 215-pound junior, is 18-2 as a starter in his first two college seasons. He is the quarterback every program in the country would love to have, including programs that play on Sundays. After leading the Volunteers to an 11-1 record and finishing sixth in the Heisman Trophy voting last season, Archie Manning's son was coveted by many NFL clubs in need of a quarterback. But he chose to bypass the '96 draft and return to college for at least one more year.

"Expectations are high and they're high for a reason," Manning said between reps during an offseason workout. "We saw just how close we were last year. I really think we were 30 minutes away from having a shot at a national championship."

That 30 minutes was a mind-boggling second half at Florida, when the Gators overcame a 30-21 deficit and blasted the Vols, 62-37. The rout knocked Tennessee out of the SEC title picture and put the Gators in position to play for the national championship. This year, though, Florida must play at Peyton's Place, an enlarged (to 102,485) Neyland Stadium in Knoxville.

The loss to Florida was the only blemish on the Vols' season, and not long after their victory over Ohio State in the Florida Citrus Bowl, their thoughts began to turn to a national title this season.

"I think we've done everything else," said Graham, a senior from Concord, N.C., who had 11 100-yard games last season. "We've been an 11-1 team. We've beaten Alabama. The last thing left to do is win a national championship."

For Tennessee to do so, Manning and Graham will have to come close to duplicating their stellar 1995 seasons. Tennessee has had great quarterbacks and great tailbacks in the past, but rarely have they complemented each other as Manning and Graham did last year.

Manning broke numerous school passing records, including most yards (2,954), most attempts (380), most completions (244) and highest completion percentage (64.2). He threw 22 touchdown passes and only four interceptions. Graham, a nice blend of strength and speed at 6-0 and 206 pounds, averaged 5.3 yards per carry in gaining a school-record 1,438 yards.

"Jay and I understand our roles," Manning said. "Having a guy like Jay would take the pressure off any quarterback in the country. On third-and-10, we feel like we can call the draw and get the first down."

"But the main thing Jay does is keep you out of third-and-long. Usually on first and second down, he'll give you some yardage."

That was Graham's goal after serving a two-year apprenticeship behind future NFL backs Charlie Garner, James Stewart and Aaron Hayden: to be dependable for at least four yards a pop.

"This time last year, I had a lot to prove," Graham said. "There had been a lot of hype since the day I walked on campus. I felt a lot had been placed on my shoulders."

"One of the biggest things to me last year was to pick up where Aaron and 'Little Man' (Stewart) left off."

As the season progressed, Graham gained the confidence to look beyond the short pop. He had a 75-yard

Manning squeezed three days of conditioning workouts into one so no teammate would think he was cutting corners.

That kind of dedication has Vols players and Tennessee fans everywhere primed for a run at the national champi-

BRUCE L. SCHWARTZMAN



JAMES D. SMITH

touchdown gallop to help the Vols break a 10-year winless streak against Alabama. In the Citrus Bowl, Graham burned Ohio State for a 69-yard touchdown run. "Going the distance—that was the difference between the beginning of the season and the end," he said.

Graham, outwardly serious but a locker-room cutup who helps keep his teammates loose, knows he benefits from having Manning in the backfield with him.

"(A defense) can't say Peyton's not having a great day and forget about him," Graham said. "He's always a threat to hit Joey Kent for 90 yards.

"Play-action is where we get our biggest plays, off the fakes. You get the defense coming in and then you hit 'em over the top. Once you start running the ball real good, you get 'em on their heels."

Unlike last year, Graham should have help this season. Brian Darden, who signed with the Vols in 1995 after finishing a celebrated high school career in Vicksburg, Miss., has gained his eligibility after being academically ineligible last fall. He and Graham are expected to provide a potent 1-2 running punch. Fullback Chester Ford returns, but his role is almost exclusively clearing holes—and helping to protect the franchise.

And there's no doubt about the franchise. The Vols made it through last season with no experienced backup to Manning and hope to do the same in '96. Incoming freshman Tee Martin of Mobile, Ala., is highly touted, but sophomore Jermaine Copeland, a would-be receiver, is next in line if Manning goes down.

Offensive coordinator David Cutcliffe says Manning's intelligence—he is an All-SEC academic selection on track to graduate in 3½ years—and desire to improve will make him an even better player.

"We're going to aim to be even more accurate and make decisions to allow us to throw for an even higher percentage than what we did," Cutcliffe said. "There's another level I believe anybody can take it to."

Manning doesn't disagree, on an individual or team basis.

"I think you've got to set your goals that way," he said. "Some guys might just say 'SEC,' but after going 11-1, being a bowl winner, let's not be afraid to say 'national championship.'"

Mike Strange covers Tennessee and the SEC for the Knoxville (Tenn.) News-Sentinel.

OFFENSIVE UNITS

BACKFIELD

1. **TEXAS:** If the BMW Backfield (QB James Brown and RBs Shon Mitchell and Ricky Williams) runs smoothly, the Longhorns will enjoy another superb season. In addition, talented RB Priest Holmes is coming back from an injury.
2. **COLORADO:** The Buffs have an excellent QB duo in Koy Detmer and John Hessler and a solid running corps in juniors Herchell Troutman, Lendon Henry and Marlon Barnes.
3. **NEBRASKA:** As usual, there are excellent running backs, headed by sophomore TB Ahman Green. True freshman TB DeAngelo Evans is the fourth-leading prep rusher of all time. The question is QB Scott Frost, a better passer than Tommie Frazier but not near the runner.
4. **FLORIDA STATE:** There's a superb TB duo in Warrick Dunn and Rock Preston. New QB Thad Busby will be better than Danny Kanell. There's talent at FB, too; watch for sophomore Khalid Abdullah.
5. **TENNESSEE:** QB Peyton Manning and TB Jay Graham are among the best in the nation at their positions. TB Brian Darden is a highly touted freshman. FB Chester Ford is a good blocker. Depth at QB appears to be nonexistent, though.
6. **FLORIDA:** The Gators have the best QB duo in the country in Danny Wuerffel and Eric Kresser. There's also a lot of talent at TB—but that talent hasn't always come through.
7. **NOTRE DAME:** The Irish have good TBs in Randy Kinder and Autry Denson and a solid FB in Marc Edwards. That leaves QB Ron Powlus, who hasn't lived up to the hype.
8. **CLEMSON:** TB Raymond Priester is a good one, as is FB Emory Smith (Emmitt's brother). QB Nealon Greene is solid, and there's great depth at TB.
9. **SYRACUSE:** The top five rushers are back from last season, including do-it-all QB Donovan McNabb (261 yards rushing, 1,991 passing). Sophomore FB Rob Konrad is a bruiser. The Orangemen have a three-headed TB: Malcolm Thomas, Kyle McIntosh and Tebucky Jones.
10. **USC:** QB Brad Otton will be better off not having to share duties with Kyle Wachholtz. USC still hasn't regained the "Tailback U." moniker, but Delon Washington is a good one. There also is good depth at TB.

LINE

1. **NEBRASKA:** No surprise here. The Huskers lost two starters, but it shouldn't matter. C Aaron Taylor, G Chris Dishman and T Eric Anderson are among the best in the nation at their positions. And there always is great depth.
2. **OHIO STATE:** T Orlando Pace is the best offensive lineman in the nation, a surefire top-10 pick in the NFL—and probably after this season. C Juan Porter and G LeShun Daniels also are solid.
3. **WISCONSIN:** The Badgers have five fifth-year seniors along their front, led by T Jerry Wunsch and G Jamie Vanderveldt.
4. **ARIZONA STATE:** T Juan Roque leads the way. The Sun Devils return all five starters (average weight: 302 pounds), and there's good depth.
5. **TEXAS A&M:** Four starters are back, headed by G Calvin Collins. Last year's line wasn't as good as the Aggies expected; this year's will meet expectations.
6. **FLORIDA:** The Gators return three starters, led by C Jeff Mitchell and G Donnie Young. Some untested—albeit talented—sophomores and redshirt freshmen must come through.
7. **NOTRE DAME:** The Irish will line up five high school All-Americans across the front. Now's the time for some of those guys to become college All-Americans. T Mike Doughty is the one to watch on a line that has four starters at least 6-6.
8. **OREGON:** Four starters return, headed by T Paul Wiggins and C Mark Gregg. This is a veteran unit: Five seniors could start, but it's more likely it will be four seniors and a junior.
9. **CALIFORNIA:** The Bears return four starters, led by mammoth T Tarik Glenn (6-6, 345), and 14 of the top 15 on the depth chart. This is a physical crew; two starters (Glenn, G Jeremy Newberry) are former DL.
10. **LSU:** Four starters return, led by sophomore G Alan Faneca, a rising star. T Ben Bordelon plays next to Faneca, and the right side definitely is the right side for TB Kevin Faulk to run behind.

RECEIVERS

1. **FLORIDA STATE:** The 'Noles have two 1,000-yard receivers returning in Andre Cooper and E.G. Green. Now add redshirt freshman Randy Moss, who may well be the best FSU receiver ever. And TE Melvin Pearsall is serviceable, too.
2. **COLORADO:** The Buffs hope speed kills. Rae Carruth, James Kidd, Phil Savoy and Chris Anderson would make up a pretty good relay squad. There also are two good TEs in Matt Lepsis and Tennyson McCarty.
3. **FLORIDA:** Sure, Chris Doering is gone. But the Gators shouldn't miss a beat with Ike Hilliard, Reidel Anthony, et al. If redshirt freshman Jamie Richardson is academically eligible, he'll make a lot of noise.
4. **TENNESSEE:** Three of the top four receivers are back, including WRs Joey Kent and Marcus Nash, but depth may be a problem.
5. **CALIFORNIA:** WRs Na'il Benjamin and Bobby Shaw give QB Pat Barnes two dependable targets. TE Tony Gonzalez, who also plays basketball, is looking for a big season in new coach Steve Mariucci's offensive scheme.
6. **TEXAS:** WR Mike Adams is a star. TE Pat Fitzgerald is solid. WR Matt Davis has developed into a big-play receiver, and Tennessee transfer Cortney Epps will make a splash at WR.
7. **ARIZONA STATE:** Underrated Keith Poole is the primary target. Isaiah Mustafa (6-4) and Kenny Mitchell (6-3) give QB Jake Plummer some big targets on the other side. Ricky Boyer gives ASU a deep threat. TE Steve Bush is a weapon, too.
8. **SAN DIEGO STATE:** WRs Will Blackwell and Az Hakim are a dynamite duo. The Aztecs are counting on some untested talent and some JC transfers to step up at TE and for depth.
9. **MINNESOTA:** QB Cory Sauter can't go to the well too often with WRs Ryan Thelwell and Tutu Atwell. Expect even more pressure on the Gophers' passing game this fall with the departure of RB Chris Darkins.
10. **UTAH:** WRs Kevin Dyson and Rocky Henry each had 55 catches and six TDs. Holdover Terence Keehan and JC All-American Daniel Jones will vie for the third receiver role. TE could be a problem.

Two Thumbs Up

Film aficionados Matt Finkes, Mike Vrabel play leading roles for Buckeyes' stout defensive corps

BY JOE POSNANSKI

It is March, relaxation time, basketball season, for crying out loud, and Ohio State defensive ends Mike Vrabel and Matt Finkes are in the video room at the Woody Hayes Center in Columbus. They are watching game films from last season.

Here they are, seniors, two of the best defensive ends in America, the nucleus for what may be college football's best defensive line, and they're shut in, watching film, dissecting film. No wonder the Ohio State coaches love these guys.

"They study film together all the time," Buckeyes defensive line coach Bill Conley says. "You can hear them yelling. These are the kinds of kids you dream of coaching."

The thing is, Finkes and Vrabel aren't exactly studying film. They are not spending these hours developing new moves. They are not analyzing all that much. "You can only learn so much," Finkes says. "We're not quarterbacks. There are only so many things you can do on the field before the other guy knocks you on your butt."

No, they are not *studying* film. They are *watching* film, like Siskel and Ebert watch film. And like Siskel and Ebert, they mainly watch film so they can insult each other.

This is the point. The insult.

"You suck," Vrabel says.

"Uh, exactly where are you going?" Finkes asks.

"Boy, he blew you off the ball there," Vrabel says.

"Nice outside move," Finkes says. "Shame the play is going inside."

"Yeah, we love watching film," Vrabel says. "We insult each other pretty good."

This is their way—the Don Rickles approach to football. Last season, the Buckeyes were 11-0 and in line for their first Rose Bowl in more than a decade before Michigan's Tim Biakabutuka ran through them. The loss knocked Ohio State out of the Rose Bowl and ended the Buckeyes' third-party candidacy for the national championship. Five weeks later, Tennessee's Peyton Manning threw over them to lead the Vols past the Buckeyes in the Citrus Bowl.

And this is how two best friends deal with the agony of a lost season: They rip each other.

"The hardest part was when you looked up at the clock and there were two minutes left and we were down eight against Michigan," Vrabel says. "And that's when we knew, regardless of whether or not we pulled out a tie, we knew we were not going to win. We were not going to the Rose Bowl. And that's when we felt

like we had screwed up something special."

This is their year. Their team. And Vrabel and Finkes want to make sure Ohio State does not screw up something special again. Last season, Ohio State was driven by three extraordinary offensive players: quarterback Bobby Hoying, wide receiver Terry Glenn and Heisman Trophy-winning running back Eddie George. With those three, OSU's defensive players were supporting actors. Extras, even.

Not this season. Oh, the offense figures to score its share of points, but all eyes are on the Ohio State defense, which returns 10 starters. And that defense is built around Finkes and Vrabel, who have combined for more sacks (46) than any teammates in school history.

"It's our senior year now," Finkes says. "We want to go to the Rose Bowl. Lately, there have been a lot of classes at Ohio State that have not gone to the Rose Bowl."

But it seems Finkes and Vrabel have done it all. They've blocked punts, been pushed around by gigantic Michigan offensive linemen and been named all-conference. They also have been wondering for three years when coach John Cooper finally will let them off special teams.

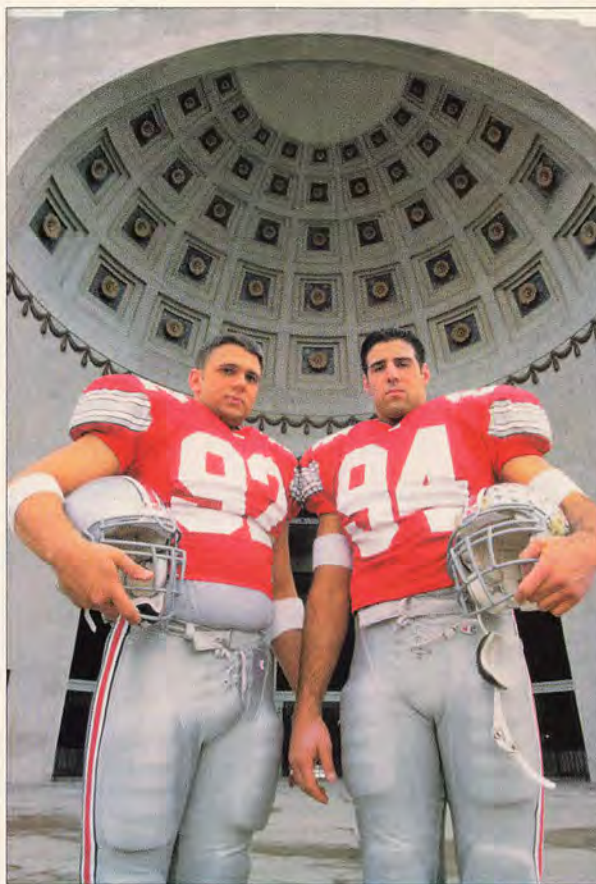
"Every year, we joke about this," Finkes says. "Eventually, they have to let us off special teams, right?"

This is what they do, mostly. Joke. Kid each other. Slam each other. This is their way of inspiring each other. At times, Finkes and Vrabel act as if the game is a *Seinfeld* episode.

But they're not always joking. Often, they're yelling. Conley says they are two of the most dedicated weightlifters on the team, and certainly two of the loudest. No slacker escapes their wrath. Vrabel, in particular, wanders about in practice and gets on anybody who does not seem to be working quite hard enough.

It's the intensity of a kid who was told by four doctors that he would have to give up football. Vrabel was a junior at Walsh Jesuit High in Akron, Ohio, when a doctor spotted a stress fracture in his spine. He said Vrabel's career was over, and so did a second doctor and a third and a fourth. Finally, Dr. Andrew Tucker, who also worked with the Cleveland Browns, fitted Vrabel with a cast and let him return.

So, Vrabel plays with the ferociousness of a kid who thought football was lost forever, usually matching up with the tight end.



Ohio State ends Matt Finkes (left) and Mike Vrabel, whose exchange of insults provides inspiration, have combined for 46 sacks in their careers.

ALBERT DICKSON/ THE SPORTING NEWS

Conley points out that although Vrabel isn't massive (6-4, 260), he can control a game in the same style as former Buckeyes star Dan Wilkinson, a 300-pound dominator who was the No. 1 overall pick in the 1994 draft.

Mostly, though, Vrabel uses his tenacity and speed to make plays. "Dan was incredibly strong," Vrabel says. "He could do pretty much whatever he wanted. I don't have that luxury. I have to do things differently."

Finkes works differently. He's shorter (6-2, 260), not quite as fast and not quite as strong. He is mostly matched up against huge offensive tackles. "You watch Matt on film, and you just figure he's going to get destroyed," Vrabel says.

Finkes has perhaps the quickest first step of any defensive lineman in the college game. He also is very unpredictable on the field. That keeps everybody guessing, including his teammates. He'll slip inside, bounce outside, and nobody on the team is better at slamming through double teams. Finkes is the first to admit that at times he is out of position. "The most-used words in my vocabulary are 'my bad,'" Finkes says. "I come back to the huddle and say, 'Hey fellas, my bad.'"

"I'm what you call a 50-50 player," Finkes says, jokingly. "Fifty percent of the time, I'm out of the play. The other 50 percent, I get you behind the line."

Finkes was the defensive MVP in the Citrus Bowl loss to Tennessee. He has a flair for big plays, something he acquired his junior year at Piqua (Ohio) High. Although he had 32 sacks in his final two high school seasons, Finkes still did not think he was very good. "The first time a recruiter called, I was stunned," he says.

Relentless pursuit is a quality both players have, and each says he learned it from the other. The Buckeyes plan to use all sorts of schemes with Finkes and Vrabel this season, sometimes lining them up next to each other to confuse the offense. But mostly they'll be on opposite sides of the line. Coaches say that's about as far apart as the two ever get.

"Along with (nose tackle) Luke Fickell, they're like the Three Musketeers," Conley says. "You never see them apart. They walk on campus together. They hang out together. They work out together. They have a great time."

Last year, all three linemen roomed together, along with the since-departed Hoying. Finkes and Vrabel, who each will graduate in four years, still live together.

The future, they hope, will be even greater. Ohio State hasn't been to Pasadena since the 1984 season. Six of the league's 11 schools have played in the game since then. Finkes and Vrabel figure this is their turn, and they will not be denied. They will insult anyone in their path.

"This is how we fire each other up," Vrabel says. "I think we're intense in our own way. When you joke about things, I think it shows you care."

"At least that's what we tell each other." ♦

Joe Posnanski is a columnist for the Cincinnati Post.

DEFENSIVE UNITS

LINE

1. **TEXAS A&M:** E Brandon Mitchell is the star, and NT Edward Jasper is a load in the middle. The line will be physical—maybe the most physical in the nation—but lacks depth.
2. **NEBRASKA:** Es Grant Wistrom and Jared Tomich are just a notch below the Vrabel-Finkes pair. T Jason Peter will be the man in the middle.
3. **USC:** The Trojans have the best pair of Ts in the nation in Darrell Russell and Matt Keneley. E Willie Lowery will be starting for a third season. One problem: untested depth.
4. **FLORIDA STATE:** Es Reinard Wilson and Peter Boulware are pass-rushing fools. NT Andre Wadsworth, a former walk-on, is tough in the middle. The pressure is on Ts Julian Pittman, Connell Spain and Corey Simon.
5. **ALABAMA:** There's only one returnee who started more than four games, but a lot of guys saw a lot of time last season. E Darrell Blackburn is an excellent pass rusher (10 sacks). JC transfer Michael Myers needs to come through at T.
6. **OHIO STATE:** The Buckeyes boast a superb pair of ends in Mike Vrabel and Matt Finkes. NT Luke Fickell is a good one. Plus, the Buckeyes should be spurred by memories of last season's Michigan debacle.
7. **MIAMI:** The 'Canes boast a good pair in Es Kenard Lang and Kenny Holmes. Ts Marvin Davis, Denny Fortney and Jason McCullough must play better than they did last season.
8. **MICHIGAN:** NT William Carr has developed into a tough run-stuffer. E Glen Steele had eight sacks last season. Some young talent will be counted on.
9. **TENNESSEE:** E Leonard Little is one of the premier pass-rushers in the nation. Four Ts who saw a lot of time return, led by Billy Beron and Ron Green. JC transfer Corey Terry could be a factor.
10. **MARYLAND:** Yep, *Maryland*. The Terps have three good ends and a solid pair of tackles. T Johnnie Hicks is active: 72 tackles last season.

LINEBACKERS

1. **NORTH CAROLINA:** The Tar Heels' LBs are big. They're fast. And there's a lot of 'em. Kivusama Mays is solid in the middle, and Brian Simmons and James Hamilton may be the best OLB pair in the nation. Simmons, especially, is a stud.
2. **COLORADO:** All three starters are back, with ILB Matt Russell the bellcow of the seven returning lettermen. Ron Merckerson, Mike Phillips and Allen Wilbon are others to watch.
3. **WASHINGTON:** OLB Jason Cholak and ILB Ink Aleaga head a group of four returning starters. There is excellent depth. Redshirt freshman Lester Towns should blossom.
4. **TEXAS A&M:** OLB Keith Mitchell is a sack machine. ILBs Dat Nguyen and Larry Walker are tough run-stuffers. The Aggies *always* have good LBs.
5. **NEBRASKA:** The Huskers are small but super quick (just ask Florida). OLB Terrell Farley is a terror off the corner. OLB Tony Ortiz, a redshirt freshman, is a youngster to watch.
6. **NOTRE DAME:** All four starters are back, and there is good depth. Sophomore OLB Kory Minor was a force as a freshman and will be better this season. ILB Lyron Cobbins is underrated.
7. **ALABAMA:** As usual, the Tide has a ton of good 'backers. OLBs Dwayne Rudd and Ralph Staten are the best.
8. **KANSAS:** Three starters return for the Jayhawks, who also welcome back ILB Ronnie Ward from injury. Ward and Jason Thoren form a solid inside duo.
9. **AUBURN:** OLB Marcellus Mostella is one of the best in the nation at his position, and sophomore ILB Takeo Spikes should burst onto the national scene this season.
10. **SYRACUSE:** OLB Nate Hemsley and ILB Antwaune Ponds are the stars for the Orangemen, who return three starters. Hemsley and Ponds combined for 230 tackles last season.

SECONDARY

1. **KANSAS STATE:** The Wildcats have the best pair of corners in the nation in Chris Canty and Joe Gordon. FS Mario Smith is pretty good, too. Depth is more than adequate.
2. **TEXAS:** All four starters are back and the depth is good. CB Bryant Westbrook and FS Chris Carter are the guys to watch. The DL won't be as good as last season, so there will be more pressure on the DBs; expect them to respond.
3. **FLORIDA:** All four starters return, and there is ample depth. In addition, a new defensive coordinator will have the athletic Gators playing more aggressively.
4. **ALABAMA:** Three starters return, and there is good depth. SS Kevin Jackson led the SEC in interceptions last season. CB Deshea Townsend has tremendous talent—but it doesn't always show.
5. **PENN STATE:** CB Brian Miller and S Kim Herring head a group of four returning starters. Depth is outstanding.
6. **USC:** The Trojans, who gave up only six TD passes last season, boast a solid pair of cornerbacks in Quincy Harrison and sophomore Daylon McCutcheon. Brian Kelly is making the move from CB to FS.
7. **MICHIGAN:** All four starters are back, headed by sophomore CB Charles Woodson. There is good depth.
8. **MIAMI:** All four starters return, but some of those guys were a bit up-and-down last season. The 'Canes need a return to form by CB Carlos Jones.
9. **LOUISVILLE:** All four starters are back, headed by CB Sam Madison; three of those four have started every game the past two seasons.
10. **SYRACUSE:** The corners are small (5-8 and 5-7), but they are quick. FS Donovin Darius piled up 131 tackles last season.

At crunch time, Donovan McNabb rallies Syracuse like clockwork orange

By DAVID RAMSEY

Donovan McNabb is famous in Syracuse for his unbending cool.

He gained this reputation with a spectacular freshman season in 1995. He set this reputation in concrete on an October afternoon in the Carrier Dome.

The teen quarterback and his offense were in a tough spot against West Virginia. They were in the "back-to-the-wall" offense while buried at their 4-yard line. This was a grudge match. West Virginia had shut out Syracuse in consecutive games, both times squashing bowl hopes. The Orangemen sought revenge, redemption and life beyond the regular season.

Syracuse offensive coordinator George DeLeone believed it was time to show daring, to push the limits. He sent in a long-ball call.

In the huddle, McNabb showed no nervousness.

"That was no surprise," says Marvin Harrison, Syracuse's star receiver last season. "The biggest play of the fourth quarter is the same as first down in the first quarter for Donovan. It doesn't matter to him."

McNabb dropped into the end zone and searched for Harrison. He searched and searched until the pressure became intense. A Mountaineer grabbed McNabb as he released the ball, forcing McNabb to let it fly with one foot off the ground.

The pass sailed 60 yards and found Harrison on the run. The speedster burned rubber until he reached the end zone—96 yards, touchdown. Syracuse won, 22-0.

Not bad for a 19-year-old quarterback.

Despite his youth, McNabb rules Syracuse. Fans chant his name. Opponents dread the moment he gets in trouble, when chaos invades the pocket, when he has to scramble. Like Denver's John Elway, McNabb is at his best in the worst situations.

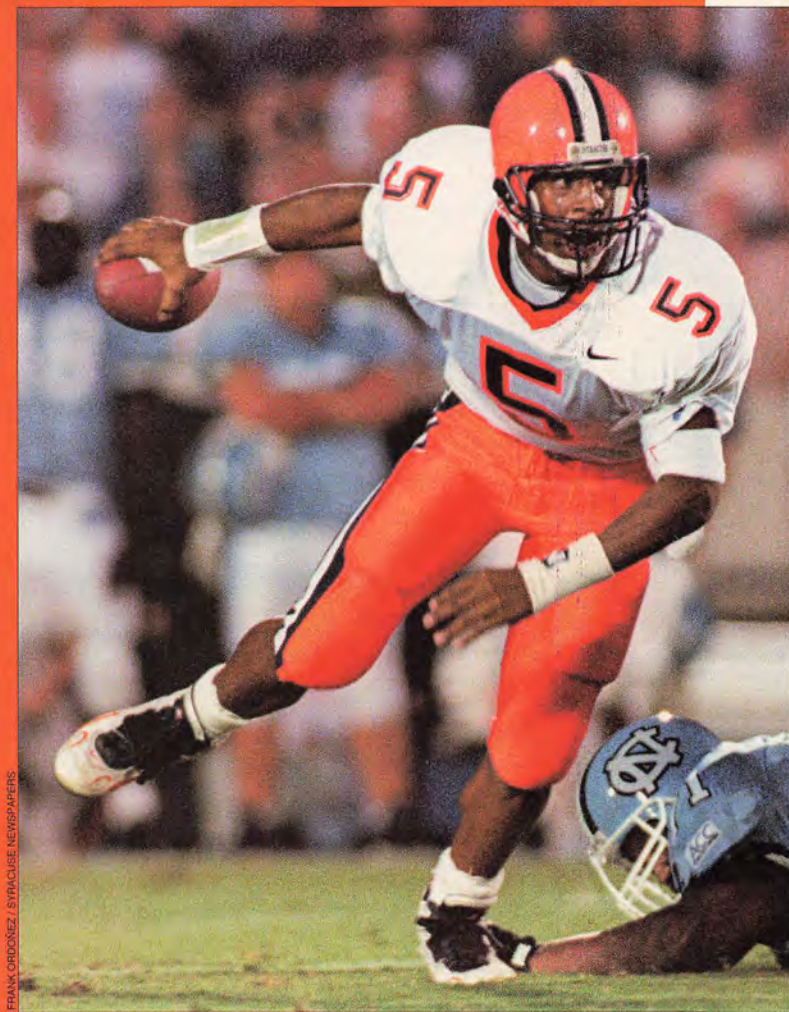
"I never saw a young quarterback with such a high average of success in the face of disaster," says Dick MacPherson, who coached the Orangemen from 1981-90 and still lives in Syracuse. "And if he didn't make the big play, he didn't kill them. He didn't do something dumb."

McNabb brings grace, drama and endless possibility to what typically is considered a brutal sport. In the middle of the rough stuff, he dances, spins, jukes and generally appears to be having a lot of fun eluding the giants. His greatest gift is his endless nerve, his utter self-belief. You won't find McNabb asking himself, "What if? What if I had thrown that crazy pass? What if I had tried a new dance step on that 300-pounder?"

"The only way you find out if things work is if you try it," McNabb says. "You can always say, 'I could have tried that, but I didn't.' I don't want to feel that way."

A year ago, he helped awaken a slumbering program. The Orangemen hadn't been to a bowl for two consecutive seasons, had bumbled in crucial late-season games, had many wondering if the sluggish days of the '70s and early '80s had returned.

Then McNabb arrived. Syracuse finished 9-3 and thumped Clemson in the Gator Bowl last season; the Orangemen appear ready to spring into the ranks of the nation's elite this season. They will be led by a quarterback who can wing the ball 65 yards, bench-press 325 pounds and run the 40 in 4.6 seconds. McNabb piled up impressive numbers, hitting 128-of-207 passes for 1,991 yards and 16 touchdowns in 1995 as a redshirt



FRANK ORDOÑEZ / SYRACUSE NEWSPAPERS

Grace Under FIRE

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freshman. But his contributions transcend arithmetic. Consider:

■ Syracuse trailed Rutgers, 17-10, in a critical early-season game. A loss may have kept the Orangemen home for the holidays for a third consecutive season. McNabb, who was struggling, sprinted left while looking for a receiver. He kept looking, as he runs only as a last resort.

"He has quick eyes," DeLeone says. "Such incredible vision."

McNabb spotted Harrison in the back of the end zone. Running the opposite direction of his target and facing a heavy rush, McNabb threaded a perfect pass to Harrison for the tying score. Syracuse proceeded to win, 27-17.

■ While he has a veteran's poise in the pocket, McNabb can run when needed. His most glowing example of that occurred against Miami in November. With the Orangemen on Miami's 17 and facing a third-and-8, coach Paul Pasqualoni called a quarterback draw. McNabb darted up the middle and found five Miami defenders. His first move conjured memories of Barry Sanders; his second was vintage Emmitt Smith. McNabb scored virtually untouched.

"I didn't see (Miami linebacker) Ray Lewis," says McNabb, who finished the season with 261 yards rushing. "I saw the end zone."

The big men chase, yet the 6-1, 208-pound McNabb remains remarkably poised. Syracuse coaches never have seen him rattled.

"It's just a game to him, I guess," says DeLeone with a touch of confusion in his voice. "Sometimes I wonder if he's just too young to see how serious the moment is. He has tremendous confidence he can make the play. It's like he did all this before."

"Don's oblivious to pressure," quarterbacks coach Kevin Rogers says. "It's like the stadium is empty."

"His poise," Syracuse running back Malcolm Thomas says, "helps all the other players stay relaxed."

This calm approach, this utter confidence, didn't just happen.

McNabb grew up in Dolton, Ill., outside Chicago, in a stable, demanding home. He was a baseball star in grade school, and his father, Samuel, figured that would be Donovan's sport. He was a skinny youngster, on the passive side when it came to sports.

One day, though, Donovan came home and announced he planned to play football. Samuel had his doubts. They soon faded. He went to his son's first game, watched him sprint to a length-of-the-field touchdown, watched him snatch two interceptions. Papa McNabb put his doubts away and began looking for ways to push his baby to the limits.

Samuel and Wilma, Donovan's mother, decided to pay him for touchdowns. The price started at \$10, though it later dropped when it became clear Donovan's sneaky open-field moves to paydirt could put the family in bankruptcy.

"Expensive? After a while, yes," Samuel says. "But we didn't mind. My wife came up with the whole concept. All kids like money. It's a hard motivator."

The McNabb home is the origin of Donovan's ability to improvise. With the support of his parents, he developed the confidence to try anything.

"Anytime I wanted, I could go home, sit down with my parents and talk about anything," he says. "Anything I couldn't deal with myself, I talked with them about. That helps a lot."

"His parents are a very, very positive force for Don," Pasqualoni says. "They were always positive for him, and they just gave him the aura of being confident."

Soon, Donovan enrolled at Mt. Carmel High, an all-boys school near Lake Michigan on Chicago's South Side. The school's powerful football program runs an option attack, perfect for McNabb's skills.

Mt. Carmel competes in the Chicago Catholic League, which features some of the roughest high school competition in America, and McNabb benefited from the battles. As a senior, he passed for 12 touchdowns and ran for 13. Mt. Carmel coach Frank Lenti remembers a playoff game in McNabb's senior year against Simeon High. McNabb dropped back in the pocket and soon found two Simeon defenders picking him up. McNabb muscled his way out of their grip, landed on both feet and scrambled to a touchdown.

"Donovan has done nothing at Syracuse that surprised me," Lenti says. "He just has those kind of capabilities."

The prestige schools began to seek him. Nebraska coach Tom Osborne saw McNabb as the perfect successor to Tommie Frazier. Pasqualoni saw McNabb as a worthy follower in what has become a recent tradition of standout Orange quarterbacks.

In the end, McNabb said no to Osborne and the Big Red. Syracuse had two factors in its favor. First, McNabb could see he would have to wait two seasons for Frazier's departure at Nebraska. At Syracuse, he would stand in line only one season. Second,

SCINTILLATING SOPHS

Here are some sophomores who—while they had solid freshman seasons—aren't as well-known as classmates such as Syracuse's Donovan McNabb, Texas' Ricky Williams, Nebraska's Ahman Green and USC's Daylon McCutcheon. By the end of this season, though, chances are you will have heard a lot about these guys:

Pos.	Player	Ht./Wt.	School
WR	Zola Davis	6-1/192	South Carolina
DT	Jared DeVries	6-4/260	Iowa
G	Alan Faneca	6-5/310	LSU
FB	Chris Fuamatu-Ma'afala	6-0/274	Utah
FS	Mitchell Freedman	6-0/192	Arizona State
SS	Martavius Houston	6-1/214	Auburn
DT	Anthony McFarland	6-1/290	LSU
CB	R.W. McQuarters	5-11/185	Oklahoma State
G	Richard Mercier	6-4/273	Miami
LB	Kory Minor	6-2/235	Notre Dame
LB	Dat Nguyen	6-1/213	Texas A&M
G	Benji Olson	6-4/300	Washington
SS	Anthony Poindexter	6-1/202	Virginia
LB	Johnny Rutledge	6-2/224	Florida
WR	David Saunders	6-2/205	West Virginia
LB	Anthony Simmons	6-1/213	Clemson
LB	Takeo Spikes	6-2/224	Auburn
G	Matt Stinchcomb	6-7/280	Georgia
DT	Floyd Wedderburn	6-5/328	Penn State
RB	Reggie Williams	5-10/235	Tulsa

Syracuse coaches were more open to McNabb's plan to play basketball, which he isn't doing on a whim. He made the team as a walk-on as a freshman and redshirted.

"It's very serious to me," he says. "Everybody talks about me not being able to play more than one Division I sport. I've taken it upon myself to prove it to myself and to everyone else that I can."

Alas, proving remains. With his socks pulled to his knees and occasionally wearing a frown, McNabb spent most of last season on the bench and watched the Orangemen earn a berth in the national championship game. McNabb wasn't used to sitting and watching.

"It's a sore point," Samuel McNabb says.

Basketball coach Jim Boeheim has been watching Syracuse football since he arrived as a student in the mid-'60s. McNabb, the coach says, is a "great football player, strong, tough, everything."

He could be a solid basketball player, Boeheim says. But there's one problem: "He misses half the season. Nobody can be a good basketball player and miss half the season."

There are other obstacles. McNabb's thick frame is beneficial on the football field, but it hurts him as a basketball defender. The Orangemen, once known for their run-and-gun attack, have developed into a defense-oriented team. Defense is McNabb's weakness. He also lacks an outside touch. He is an aggressive force on the court, and would make a marvelous power forward—if he stood six inches taller. But McNabb, who played in just six games and averaged 0.8 points last season, doesn't appear to be growing.

Regardless, he remains committed to hoops, even though he's likely doomed to sit for at least another season.

MacPherson believes McNabb's experience in basketball will prove beneficial. MacPherson wondered if McNabb could stay focused after enjoying tremendous success so quickly in football.

"He needed that humbling experience in basketball," MacPherson says. "We can thank Coach Boeheim for keeping him humble."

McNabb faces a difficult task topping his freshman feats, which include ranking third in the nation in passing efficiency (142.0), an NCAA record for a freshman. Pasqualoni says McNabb "has a long way to go." But he struggles to find specifics. He says McNabb needs to work on his ballhandling, his fakes and his follow-through after pitches. Much labor awaits McNabb, the coach says. So much is ahead. So much improvement is possible. But, hey, McNabb appears equipped to handle the pressure. ♦

David Ramsey is a columnist for the Syracuse (N.Y.) Herald-Journal.

The Sporting News

TOP 25

CAPSULES BY IVAN MAISEL



RUDY WINSTON / SCHWARTZMAN SPORTS

1. FLORIDA STATE

The last time the Seminoles failed to finish in the top four, Tom Osborne was losing to Barry Switzer and a web site was the corner of your living room ceiling. Watch out—Bobby Bowden's going to make it nine years in a row. New quarterback Thad Busby has a big arm and the quick feet that Danny Kanell didn't. And how inexperienced can any quarterback look with Warrick Dunn behind him and Andre Cooper, E.G. Green and freshman star-to-be Randy Moss catching passes? The Seminoles will need to stay healthy on the offensive line. The defense didn't meet Florida State standards, so Bowden shifted four coaches. Former Seminole All-American nose tackle Odell Haggins will coach the interior line. End Reinard Wilson and linebacker Daryl Bush are potential award winners.

RB Warrick Dunn

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2. NEBRASKA



You know what they say about the Cornhuskers—they don't rebuild, they reform. There's no Tommie Frazier, no Lawrence Phillips and, naturally, no problem. The one law Nebraska will break this season is the law of averages. Frazier's skills and mental toughness can't be replaced, but Stanford transfer Scott Frost gets first shot. Phillips won't be missed. Ahman Green and Damon Benning proved that last year. The reason Nebraska will remain a power? Ask Florida. Five players from the defensive front seven return. The next team to stop Jared Tomich, Grant Wistrom and Terrell Farley & Co. from moving the line of scrimmage will be the first.

RB Ahman Green

3. FLORIDA



Don't make too much of the 62-24 loss to Nebraska. The Gators still rule the Southeastern Conference. Danny Wuerffel, aka the Last Boy Scout, has returned for his final year of milk, cookies and touchdown passes. Wuerffel is one of eight starters back from an offense that scored 74 touchdowns. Ike Hilliard will be Wuerffel's favorite target. The most important Gator on defense is new coordinator Bob Stoops, who developed All-American defensive backs galore at Kansas State. He has four starters returning in the secondary but must rebuild the line. Road games at Tennessee and Florida State provide early and late tests. The Gators won't pass both of them.

G Donnie Young

4. TENNESSEE



Will junior quarterback Peyton Manning run for governor? Will Peyton Manning run for his life? Will Tennessee gain a foothold on the national championship without using illegal cleats? Manning may be the best college quarterback in the nation. Wide receivers Joey Kent and Marcus Nash combine speed and hands. Tailback Jay Graham gained 1,438 yards running out of Manning's shadow. But only right tackle Robert Poole returns on the line. Tennessee, like Colorado, must figure out how to beat the bully on its block. Florida torched Tennessee for 62 points last year. The return of senior safety Jason Parker from his one-year phone-scam suspension will help.

WR Joey Kent

5. COLORADO



In most cases, when only six starters are missing from a 10-2 team, you can start measuring ring sizes. But the Buffaloes still have a hurdle to overcome (it's big and red). Colorado's adjustment to the 4-3 front appeared complete at season's end, but the Buffs must prove it against the Nebraskas. Middle linebacker Matt Russell proves it against everybody. Two very important Buffs are returning from knee surgery. In the secondary, Dalton Simmons is trying to regain the form he took into the '95 Fiesta Bowl. Quarterback Koy Detmer participated in 7-on-7 drills in the spring. The schedule is a killer—or it may breed one.

LB Matt Russell

6. SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA



John Robinson has brought the good old days back to Troy. In the first three months of this year, the Trojans won a Rose Bowl and unveiled an academic scandal. History says USC won't return to Pasadena—no Pac-10 team has since Washington (1990-92 seasons). Quarterback Brad Otton and tailback Delon Washington will play behind a line in which only two players have started a game. Good thing the defense is strong. Tackles Darrell Russell and Matt Keneley, along with end Willie Lowery, anchor a tough line, and the secondary includes super sophomore Daylon McCutcheon and Quincy Harrison on the corners and Brian Kelly at safety.

QB Brad Otton

7. NOTRE DAME



Lou Holtz has his kind of team: Notre Dame will run and run. The Irish return five linemen with starting time. The key is how well sophomore Mike Rosenthal switches from tackle to guard. Autry Denson, Randy Kinder, Robert Farmer and Marc Edwards combined for 2,415 rushing yards and 27 touchdowns last year. Ron Powilus' broken left arm has healed. Whether his right arm gets used depends on whether the Irish find someone—anyone—who can catch. The defense mirrors the offense. The front seven may be the best since the late 1980s, headed by end Renaldo Wynn. The secondary is, um, not. If opposing passers survive the rush, they'll thrive. That's a big if.

TB Randy Kinder

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8. MIAMI



Since the end of last season, the Hurricanes have been put on probation, missed a bowl game, learned that teammate Marlin Barnes was murdered and lost senior wide receiver Jammi German—perhaps for the season—to a knee injury. The games can't start soon enough. Ten starters return on defense, but the one hole is big—middle linebacker Ray Lewis left early for the NFL. Senior James Burgess or touted freshman Nathaniel Webster will step in. Free safety Tremain Mack is a star pass defender and kick blocker. Quarterback Ryan Clement and tailback Danyell Ferguson will benefit from a veteran line. If center K.C. Jones returns to pre-knee surgery form, he's an All-American.

C K.C. Jones

9. TEXAS



Just to make sure his players are as young as they say, John Mackovic asked if they recalled the last time the Longhorns won a January 1 bowl. When none of them could (it was 1982), Mackovic relaxed. No Ron McKelvey-Weavers in this group. This past New Year's Eve, Virginia Tech beat up Texas in the Sugar Bowl. Seven starters on each side return older and stronger. Quarterback James Brown, fullback Ricky Williams and receiver Mike Adams are the best at what they do in the Big 12 South. Texas must replace defensive end Tony Brackens. Cornerback Bryant Westbrook anchors the secondary. One problem: Kicker Phil Dawson had spring knee surgery.

FB Ricky Williams

10. AUBURN



The Tigers lost eight starters, but the most important newcomer is 56 years old. Defensive coordinator Bill Oliver comes from rival Alabama to resurrect a unit that gave up 21.8 points and 385 yards a game last year. How quickly the Tigers translate Oliver's complex schemes into action will determine the offense's load. But it can carry a lot. Tigers fans believed junior quarterback Dameyune Craig was better than Patrick Nix last season. Fred Beasley returns to tailback after a year at fullback. The biggest hole to fill, literally and figuratively, was left by offensive tackle Willie Anderson, who went to the NFL early. The offensive line had better come together quickly.

LB Takeo Spikes

11. IOWA



The Hawkeyes weren't equal to their 8-4 record last year, when they went 2-3 against winning teams. But they're better now. Why? The same players are back, 16 starters in all. The defense must carry the load early, while the offensive line rebuilds. No sweat, not with tackle Jared DeVries, end Bill Ennis-Inge and corners Plez Atkins and Tom Knight. Matt Sherman is the best returning passer in the Big Ten. Senior Sedrick Shaw is a rare find—he ran for 1,477 yards and dished the NFL. The four consecutive games the Hawkeyes lost last year return in order: Penn State, Ohio State, Illinois, Northwestern. Three-and-one will mean Roses.

RB Sedrick Shaw

12. PENN STATE



It's a good thing you win with defense. Otherwise, Joe Paterno's 31st season would be long. As it is, only three offensive starters return. JoePa auditioned for line help from the defense. Early on, quarterback Wally Richardson will have to scramble and tailback Curtis Enis will take a hit. The defense got burned by the pass last season, but chalk it up to inexperience. The secondary, led by cornerback Brian Miller and safety Kim Herring, now is a plus. Mix it with a tough rushing defense led by tackle Brandon Noble and linebacker Gerald Filardi, and the offense will get time to grow. The schedule is tough. No Roses, perhaps, but no funeral bouquets, either.

S Kim Herring

13. SYRACUSE



Quarterback Donovan McNabb got the starting job the day before the opener, led the Orangemen to a 9-3 record, closed with a 41-0 rout of Clemson in the Gator Bowl and served as a scrub on the Final Four basketball team. For an encore, McNabb will be chosen chancellor. Syracuse would settle for a Big East title. The left side of the offensive line is new and the Orange is shopping for a deep threat now that Marvin Harrison is gone. Junior wide receiver Jim Turner may be the answer. The league's best secondary features cornerback Kevin Abrams and safety Donovin Darius, but the Orangemen won't get their rings until they stop the run.

FB Rob Konrad

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14. OHIO STATE



Coming off the most disappointing 11-victory season in Buckeyes history, Ohio State has to replace a Heisman winner, a Biletnikoff winner and a three-year starter at quarterback. It's not as bad as you think. Four offensive linemen, including massive tackle Orlando Pace, will give the new guys lots of room. Stanley Jackson leads JC transfer Mark Garcia in the race to start at quarterback. Tailback Pepe Pearson lacks Eddie George's size, but he still averaged 4.6 yards per carry in '95. Ten starters return on defense, including star ends Matt Finkes and Mike Vrabel. The Buckeyes play four road games in five weeks down the stretch. Maybe last year won't look so bad.

T Orlando Pace

15. ARIZONA STATE



The only thing more crowded than Phoenix freeways is the Sun Devils' bandwagon. Everyone but Frank Kush returns for Arizona State, which won four of its last five. In an era when senior All-American is an oxymoron, the Sun Devils have three candidates: quarterback Jake Plummer, offensive tackle Juan Roque and receiver Keith Poole. Arizona State averaged 28 points last season and coach Bruce Snyder thinks his team can add a touchdown to that. The Sun Devils could use it—they scored 20 or more points in four of five losses. The key to the defense will be developing a pass rush. Free safety Mitchell Freedman is the key to the rebirth.

QB Jake Plummer

16. TEXAS A&M



This team is classic Aggie: lots of defense and lots of what-ifs on offense. Linebacker Keith Mitchell is the latest in a long line of A&M greats. Defensive end Brandon Mitchell is related only in the sense that he also eats quarterbacks. Early games against BYU and Colorado will test a young secondary headed by cornerback Donovan Greer. Junior Brannon Stewart, a Texas native who went to Tennessee with Peyton Manning and left because of him, takes over at quarterback. Sophomore "triplets" Sirr Parker, Eric Bernard and D'Andre Hardeman will share replacing Leeland McElroy. This is a good team, but in the Big 12, "good" ain't good enough.

LB Dat Nguyen

17. VIRGINIA



The Cavaliers have won at least seven games in each of the past nine seasons, which means George Welsh loses about as often as he smiles. Mr. Warmth proved to the rest of the ACC last season that Florida State can be beaten. That bodes well for tailback Tiki Barber, who will battle the Seminoles' Warrick Dunn for national acclaim. Since the Cavaliers have no experience at quarterback or receiver, Barber must carry the offense. The defense is solid up front, led by linebackers James Farrior and Jamie Sharper. Cornerback Ronde Barber (Tiki's twin) and safety Anthony Poindexter head a young secondary. The schedule is a load.

RB Tiki Barber

18. LSU



Gerry DiNardo brought back the magic; now it's time to bring back a title. LSU has a chance. The sophomore combo of quarterback Herb Tyler and tailback Kevin Faulk is the best in the SEC West. Tight end David LaFleur will control the middle of the field. A young receiver—is that you, Chris Beard?—must provide the deep threat Eddie Kennison took to the NFL. The Tigers' biggest question is on defense. With end Gabe Northern gone, will the pass rush go south? Not with tackles Chuck Wiley and Anthony McFarland, linebacker Allen Stansberry and cornerback Denard Walker. The Tigers' tale will be told at Auburn, at Florida and at Arkansas.

TB Kevin Faulk

19. VIRGINIA TECH



You can see the hair rising on the Hokies' necks: Picked third in the Big East after a 10-2 season? We can explain: Almost half the defense is gone. End Cornell Brown and free safety Torrian Gray will try to hold things together. The good news is that the offense is back. Jim Druckenmiller plays quarterback with a linebacker's mentality. Junior Ken Oxendine takes over at tailback, but coach Frank Beamer must find new receivers. After a September visit to Syracuse, Virginia Tech plays East Carolina, at Miami, West Virginia and Virginia in November. That's a lot to ask of any team in one month, even one that has an inferiority complex.

FS Torrian Gray

THE SPORTING NEWS TOP 25

20. OREGON



ALBERT DICKSON / THE SPORTING NEWS

For Oregon to make it three premier bowl trips in a row, a young defense must grow up quickly. There is plenty of excitement on offense. Who can stop quarterback Tony Graziani? Who dares stop Josh Wilcox, a tight end with an Oakland Raiders attitude and, yes, Oakland Raiders talent. Who replaces tailback Ricky Whittle? Sophomore Kevin Parker gets first quack. The special teams are in good shape now that kicker/punter Matt Belden has returned from an injury redshirt. Coach Mike Bellotti has a new, long-term deal, which eases the pain of breaking in two new coordinators and a new defense. Junior cornerback Kenny Wheaton will be the star of that defense.

QB Tony Graziani

21. KANSAS STATE



ALAN KEE / BOB ROSATO SPORT PHOTOGRAPHY

Now that the Wildcats have won 28 games in three seasons, they can do something else only good teams do—win seven games and have an off year. Quarterback Brian Kavanagh proved in a relief role in the Holiday Bowl that Kansas State will experience little dropoff from Matt Miller. Of course, wide receiver Kevin Lockett would make any passer look like a bowl MVP. With studs Chris Canty and Joe Gordon at the corners, the young defensive line has the chance to learn how to rush the passer. How fast it learns will determine the season. There's little depth on defense, and the schedule toughens with the entrance into the Big 12.

CB Joe Gordon

22. ALABAMA



BOB ROSATO

Peace reigns in Tuscaloosa, where the coaches bickered often last season. The team reflected the dissension. Gene Stallings promoted Mike Dubose to defensive coordinator and Woody McCorvey to the same job with the offense, which means either is "Bebe's" likely successor. The good news is that four offensive line starters, quarterback Freddie Kitchens and tailback Dennis Riddle return. With six returning starters, Dubose can afford to rush the passer and leave corners Deshea Townsend and Fernando Bryant to fend for themselves (they will). Alabama won't feel the squeeze of NCAA probation for two years. This team will give the fans memories for the lean times ahead.

OLB Dwayne Rudd

23. MICHIGAN



ELSA HASCH / THE SPORTING NEWS

Guess they figure now that they gave Lloyd Carr the permanent office, they can beat up on him with a brutal schedule. Nine starters return on defense, but how did a team that led the Big Ten against the run lose four times? The passing game never jelled on either side of the ball. After linebacker Jarrett Irons and corners Charles Woodson and Clarence Thompson, all the Wolverines need is a rush. End Glen Steele can't do it alone; some youngsters must come through. On offense, quarterbacks Scott Dreisbach and Brian Griese learned on the job last year. Unfortunately, their receivers must do the same this year, as does tailback Clarence Williams.

LB Jarrett Irons

24. CLEMSON



SCOTT HALLERAN

In January, Clemson lost, 41-0, to Syracuse in the Gator Bowl and legendary former coach Frank Howard died. In February, four Tigers were arrested and charged with raping a fellow student. Not good omens as Clemson embarks on its football centennial. But the Tigers may celebrate yet. Quarterback Nealon Greene, tailback Raymond Priester and fullback Emory Smith give coach Tommy West every type of skill an offense needs. But only two starters return on the line. The defense is young, but that may not matter. As a freshman last year, linebacker Anthony Simmons led the Tigers with 150 tackles. The year will end better than it began.

TB Raymond Priester

25. NORTHWESTERN



ALBERT DICKSON / THE SPORTING NEWS

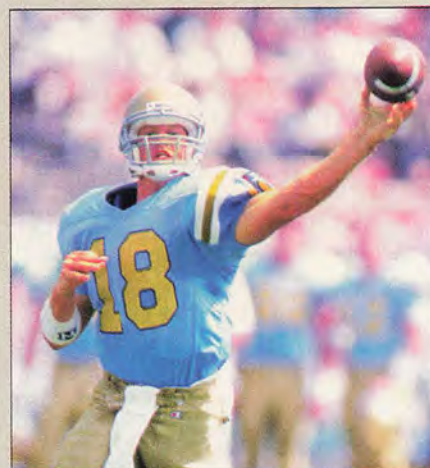
What could the Wildcats do to top last season? How many losses will it take for the bandwagon to empty? The second question won't be answered soon: Too many Wildcats are wearing Rose Bowl rings. Tailback/actor Darnell Autry returns with 1,675 rushing yards from '95 on his resume. Junior wide receiver D'Wayne Bates is a coming star and quarterback Steve Schnur is the level-headed leader. Inside linebacker Pat Fitzgerald missed the spring because of last season's broken leg. He leads a veteran defense. The schedule is easier, but the Wildcats won't get every bounce this season. If they finish 8-4 instead of 10-2, will the alums complain?

RB Darnell Autry

NOS. 26-111

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 26. Washington | 70. Miami (Ohio) |
| 27. Kansas | 71. Memphis |
| 28. Utah | 72. Rice |
| 29. Baylor | 73. Vanderbilt |
| 30. North Carolina | 74. TCU |
| 31. Texas Tech | 75. Minnesota |
| 32. Stanford | 76. Duke |
| 33. Georgia | 77. Oregon State |
| 34. San Diego State | 78. Utah State |
| 35. Brigham Young | 79. Ball State |
| 36. Michigan State | 80. Nevada |
| 37. Georgia Tech | 81. Eastern Michigan |
| 38. East Carolina | 82. Houston |
| 39. West Virginia | 83. Army |
| 40. Boston College | 84. Toledo |
| 41. Arizona | 85. Temple |
| 42. South Carolina | 86. Bowling Green |
| 43. Arkansas | 87. Rutgers |
| 44. Purdue | 88. New Mexico |
| 45. UCLA | 89. Western Michigan |
| 46. Wisconsin | 90. Navy |
| 47. Maryland | 91. SW Louisiana |
| 48. California | 92. Louisiana Tech |
| 49. Mississippi State | 93. Tulane |
| 50. Wyoming | 94. Hawaii |
| 51. N.C. State | 95. Northern Illinois |
| 52. Cincinnati | 96. Wake Forest |
| 53. Louisville | 97. Central Michigan |
| 54. Washington State | 98. NE Louisiana |
| 55. Indiana | 99. Arkansas State |
| 56. Pitt | 100. Texas-El Paso |
| 57. Illinois | 101. Akron |
| 58. Mississippi | 102. Idaho |
| 59. Oklahoma | 103. Boise State |
| 60. Fresno State | 104. San Jose State |
| 61. Missouri | 105. UNLV |
| 62. Air Force | 106. Kent |
| 63. Southern Miss | 107. Central Florida |
| 64. Oklahoma State | 108. New Mexico State |
| 65. Tulsa | 109. Ohio University |
| 66. Iowa State | 110. North Texas |
| 67. Kentucky | 111. Ala.-Birmingham |
| 68. SMU | |
| 69. Colorado State | |

It's unlikely that Cade McNown and his teammates will go bowling this season under new coach Bob Toledo. The Bruins should finish in the middle of the pack in the Pac-10.



ALBERT DICKSON / THE SPORTING NEWS

COLLEGE BOWL SCHEDULE

BOWL	SITE	DATE	TV	MATCHUP
Las Vegas Bowl	Las Vegas	Dec. 19	ESPN	MAC #1 vs. Big West #1
Aloha Bowl	Honolulu	Dec. 25	ABC	Pac-10 #4 vs. Big 12 #6
Haka Bowl	Auckland, New Zealand	Dec. 26	ESPN	Pac-10 #3 vs. Open
Copper Bowl	Tucson, Ariz.	Dec. 27	ESPN	WAC #2 vs. Big 12 #5
Carquest Bowl	Miami	Dec. 27	TBS/Raycom	Big East #3 vs. ACC #4
Liberty Bowl	Memphis	Dec. 27 or 28	ESPN	Conference USA #1 vs. Big East #4
Peach Bowl	Atlanta	Dec. 28	ESPN	ACC #3 vs. SEC #4
Alamo Bowl	San Antonio	Dec. 29	ESPN	Big 10 #4 vs. Big 12 #4
Holiday Bowl	San Diego	Dec. 30	ESPN	WAC #1/Pac-10 #2 vs. Big 12 #3
Independence Bowl	Shreveport, La.	Dec. 30	ESPN	SEC #5 vs. Open
Orange Bowl	Miami	Dec. 31	CBS	Alliance #4 vs. Alliance #6
Sun Bowl	El Paso, Texas	Dec. 31	CBS	Pac-10 #5 vs. Big 10 #5
Citrus Bowl	Orlando	Jan. 1	ABC	Big 10 #2 vs. SEC #2
Cotton Bowl	Dallas	Jan. 1	CBS	Wac #1/Pac-10 #2 vs. Big 12 #2
Fiesta Bowl	Tempe, Ariz.	Jan. 1	CBS	Alliance #3 vs. Alliance #5
Gator Bowl	Jacksonville	Jan. 1	NBC	ACC #2 vs. Big East #2
Outback Bowl	Tampa	Jan. 1	ESPN	SEC #3 vs. Big 10 #3
Rose Bowl	Pasadena, Calif.	Jan. 1	ABC	Pac-10 #1 vs. Big 10 #1
Sugar Bowl	New Orleans	Jan. 2	ABC	Alliance #1 vs. Alliance #2

COACHING CHANGES

DIVISION I-A

SCHOOL	OLD COACH	NEW COACH	NEW COACH'S FORMER POSITION
California	Keith Gilbertson	Steve Mariucci	Green Bay Packers QB coach
Georgia	Ray Goff	Jim Donnan	Marshall coach
Hawaii	Bob Wagner	Fred vonAppen	Colorado defensive line coach
Louisiana Tech	Joe Raymond Peace	Gary Crowton	Louisiana Tech offensive coordinator
Nevada	Chris Ault	To be announced	
Northern Illinois	Charlie Sadler	Joe Novak	Indiana defensive coordinator
Oklahoma	Howard Schnellenberger	John Blake	Dallas Cowboys DL coach
Rutgers	Doug Graber	Terry Shea	B.C. Lions (CFL) quarterback coach
UCLA	Terry Donahue	Bob Toledo	UCLA offensive coordinator

DIVISION I-AA

SCHOOL	OLD COACH	NEW COACH	NEW COACH'S FORMER POSITION
Boston University	Dan Allen	Tom Masella	Fairfield coach*
Colgate	Ed Sweeney	Dick Biddle	Colgate running backs coach
Fairfield*	Tom Masella	Kevin Kiesel	Albright coach
Georgia Southern	Tim Stowers	Frank Ellwood†	Ga. Southern assistant AD
Holy Cross	Peter Vaas	Dan Allen	Boston U. coach
Illinois State	Jim Heacock	Todd Berry	East Carolina offensive coordinator
Marshall	Jim Donnan	Bob Pruett	Florida defensive coordinator
San Diego	Brian Fogarty	To be announced	
Southern Utah	Jack Bishop	Rich Ellerson	Arizona assistant
Tennessee State	Bill Davis	L.C. Cole	Cincinnati assistant
Tennessee Tech	Jim Ragland	Mike Hennigan	Tenn. Tech defensive coordinator

*—Fairfield begins play this season. †—Ellwood will serve as interim coach this season.

LEAGUE RANKINGS

The new kid on the block is the toughest kid on the block

By MIKE HUGUENIN

There has been a tremendous reshuffling on the college football scene. The storied Southwest Conference is no more; instead, four old SWC teams have joined with the former Big Eight members to make the Big 12. The wild and wacky WAC has a staggering 16 teams. Another new league, Conference USA, makes its football debut. The Big West goes from 10 teams to six. And four schools are making the big step from Division I-AA to Division I-A.

With the new alignments also comes a reshuffling in the league rankings. Listen in on THE SPORTING NEWS 1996 conference call:

1. BIG 12

Teams: 12 (Baylor, Colorado, Iowa State, Kansas, Kansas State, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Oklahoma State, Texas, Texas A&M, Texas Tech). **Comment:** The new kid on the block also is the bully on the block—at least for this season. A lot of people think the Big 12 is the best league because its teams went 6-1 in bowls last season. That's nonsense—in reality, only one bowl meant anything last season, and, yes, a Big 12 team won it. But quite simply, the reason this is the best league is that there is a ton of talent—and a lot of good teams. Eight teams (all but Iowa State, Missouri, Oklahoma and Oklahoma State) look to be contenders for the Top 25. No other league—this season, at least—is that deep. That's why the Big 12 is No. 1.

2. SOUTHEASTERN

Teams: 12 (Alabama, Arkansas, Auburn, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, LSU, Mississippi, Mississippi State, Tennessee, South Carolina, Vanderbilt). **Comment:** Yes, the longtime No. 1 has fallen to No. 2. But it's not really that big a distance between the Big 12 and the SEC. Florida and Tennessee can play with anybody in the nation. Auburn is getting there. Another season or so, and LSU looks as if it will be there. Alabama always has one of the best defenses in the nation (now, if Gene Stallings ever realizes you need a good offense, too, watch out). South Carolina, under coach Brad Scott, has recruited well and appears on the verge of being able to consistently challenge for the upper division in the SEC East. Perhaps a change in coaches will put Georgia back in the hunt for the SEC title. And Arkansas and Mississippi State occasionally rise up and contend. As for Kentucky, Vandy and Mississippi, the best that can be said is that: 1.) Kentucky sure can play basketball; 2.) It sure is easy to get good tickets for a game at Vandy; and 3.) The pre-game walk through "The Grove" at Ole Miss is stirring.

3. BIG TEN

Teams: 11 (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Michigan State, Minnesota, Northwestern, Penn State, Purdue, Ohio State, Wisconsin). **Comment:** There's been a lot of talk recently about the Big Ten's failure to be a factor in the past couple of NCAA basketball tournaments. Hey, what about football? No Big Ten team has won the national title since Ohio State in 1968. (Yes, Penn State won in '82 and '86, but the Nittany Lions weren't in the league then. And, yes, Penn State in '94 finished undefeated—but behind Nebraska in the polls.) Still, Big Ten teams play good football. Penn State, Michigan and Ohio State are as solid as football programs can be (though it wouldn't hurt to see the Wolverines and/or Buckeyes win a couple of big games). Gary Barnett could have Northwestern on the cusp of challenging each year (though that was said about Barry Alvarez and Wisconsin two years ago). Iowa looks as if it will be a national contender of sorts this season (though the Hawkeyes have been to a "major" bowl just once in the past 10 seasons). You see, for every good thing, there seemingly is a bad. That brings us to Minnesota, Indiana and Purdue—three programs that have had one combined Top 20 finish since the 1980 season. And, no, we haven't forgotten Illinois. Here's the deal: When Illinois has a consistent offense, we'll mention them in more depth.

4. PACIFIC-10

Teams: 10 (Arizona, Arizona State, California, Oregon, Oregon State, Southern California, Stanford, UCLA, Washington, Washington State). **Comment:** Unlike the other conference with the word "Ten" in its name, this league does indeed have 10 teams. The Pac-10 is comfortably ahead of the ACC in terms of football, but it's not nearly as strong as the Big Ten. There is not a potential No. 1 team in this league; indeed, no Pac-10 team has finished in the Top 10 since Washington won a share of the national title in '91. There appears to be a number of good young coaches in the conference (Stanford's Tyrone Willingham, Oregon's Mike Bellotti, Cal's Steve Mariucci), so there's some hope that the Pac-10 can improve as a whole.

5. ATLANTIC COAST

Teams: 9 (Clemson, Duke, Florida State, Georgia Tech, Maryland, North Carolina, North Carolina State, Virginia, Wake Forest). **Comment:** The gap between the Pac-10 and the ACC is a large one. Bottom line: The ACC is a basketball league. Yes, FSU is a powerhouse. And, yes, Virginia, North Carolina and Clemson traditionally are strong. And Tech and N.C. State generally have solid teams. Still, except at Clemson and FSU, graduates and students care more about basketball than football. And that's why the ACC almost always is the strongest hoops league.

6. BIG EAST

Teams: 8 (Boston College, Miami, Pitt, Rutgers, Syracuse, Temple, Virginia Tech, West Virginia). **Comment:** There are some good teams in this league, like Miami, Syracuse and Virginia Tech. But there also are some really bad teams in this league, like Temple and Rutgers. Temple coach Ron Dickerson may be fighting a lost cause. If new Rutgers coach Terry Shea can just keep New Jersey talent from heading out of state, Rutgers has a chance to be a player in this league. The key to this conference's national stature is Miami. If coach Butch Davis can overcome the NCAA-imposed recruiting sanctions,



Expect Nebraska's Terrell Farley and other Big 12 linebackers to put the wood to undermanned nonconference foes throughout this season.

Miami—and the league—will be all right.

7. WESTERN ATHLETIC

Teams: 16 (Air Force, Brigham Young, Colorado State, Fresno State, Hawaii, New Mexico, Rice, San Diego State, San Jose State, Southern Methodist, Texas Christian, Texas-El Paso, Tulsa, UNLV, Utah, Wyoming). **Comment:** Talk about your far-flung conferences. The WAC now encompasses five time zones. The addition of Rice, SMU and TCU brings in teams with some football tradition. At the same time, though, it's hard to imagine folks in Dallas-Fort Worth getting too worked up about a San Jose State at SMU game, or folks in Salt Lake City getting too excited about Rice at Utah (though both schools do play their home games at Rice Stadium). The upshot: The WAC did improve, albeit slightly, with the influx of six new teams. This league isn't as far behind the Big East as some might think.

8. CONFERENCE USA

Teams: 6 (Cincinnati, Houston, Louisville, Memphis, Southern Mississippi, Tulane). **Comment:** As was proved last season, this is an excellent basketball league. But in terms of football, it's miles behind the WAC and only a few yards ahead of the MAC. Cincinnati coach Rick Minter has done a good job of rebuilding the Bearcats; as such, don't expect Minter—a former assistant to Lou Holtz at Notre Dame—to stay around much longer. There are two ways to characterize the remaining five teams in the league: rebuilding or road kill. Because of economic reasons, a lot of these teams are forced to play murderous road schedules. But until—or unless—these teams improve, it will be that way every year.

9. MID-AMERICAN

Teams: 10 (Akron, Ball State, Bowling Green, Central Michigan, Eastern Michigan, Kent, Miami of Ohio, Ohio University, Toledo, Western Michigan). **Comment:** As usual, there is some good talent here—Toledo RB Wasean Tail, Ball State P Brad Maynard, Central Michigan S Quincy Wright, Miami OLB Dee Osborne. But, as usual, there's not a lot of it. And there also are some truly bad teams—Akron, Kent and Ohio have been among the 10 or so worst Division I-A teams for the past three seasons.

10. BIG WEST

Teams: 6 (Boise State, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico State, North Texas, Utah State). **Comment:** At least the name fits now. For the past couple of years, "Big West" wasn't an apt name for a league that included schools in Louisiana, Arkansas and Illinois. Boise State and Idaho have moved up from the Division I-AA Big Sky Conference. If you like a lot of offense, Nevada is a team to watch. The Wolf Pack have finished first or second in the nation in total offense the past three seasons and four of the past five.

10a. INDEPENDENTS

Teams: 11. **Comment:** Yeah, we know "Independents" isn't really a league. We're going to have a little quiz, anyway. Excepting Notre Dame, Army and Navy, name the other eight football independents. It's tough. And—quite frankly—the football isn't too good. Two of the independents—Central Florida and Alabama-Birmingham—are new to Division I-A. While it's hard to imagine UCF or UAB ever challenging for supremacy in their respective states, there is enough high school talent in those states for those two schools to perhaps become solid mid-level programs. And with that kind of potential, you have to think some league (Conference USA, perhaps?) will want to snap those schools up. The other independents, by the way: East Carolina (a very solid mid-level program; so why aren't the Pirates in a league? Location, location, location.); Northeast Louisiana; Arkansas State; Louisiana Tech; Southwestern Louisiana; and Northern Illinois. The last four were in the Big West last season. Northern Illinois will be in the MAC next season.

Mike Huguenin is an assistant managing editor for THE SPORTING NEWS.

NORTH DIVISION



THE SPORTING NEWS

Senior end Jared Tomich is one of seven returning starters on a fierce Nebraska defense.

1. NEBRASKA

Offensive strengths: The usual—big bodies, great legs. A trio of 300-pound linemen (Eric Anderson, Aaron Taylor and Chris Dishman) form a beefy nucleus for an attack that rushed for 399.8 yards a game in '95. Running behind them will be gifted I-backs Ahman Green (Big Eight freshman of the year), Damon Benning, James Sims and perhaps freshman DeAngelo Evans.

Offensive weaknesses: Quarterback. That's not to say junior Scott Frost, who went to Stanford in 1993 as a drop-back passer but was the starting free safety and backup QB when he transferred in 1994, isn't capable. Depth is a problem. Senior Matt Turman, a former walk-on, is the only returning QB with game experience.

Defensive strengths: Dismal news for Big 12 passers: Ends Grant Wistrom and Jared Tomich are two of seven returning starters and might be Nebraska's best-ever pass-rushing tandem. The hyper brother act of down linemen Christian and Jason Peter is down to only Jason, but he's an All-American candidate. Not many running backs can outrun Terrell Farley (Big Eight defensive newcomer of the year) and his linebacker mates.

Defensive weaknesses: The secondary loses starters Tyrone Williams and Tony Veland, which will put pressure on the pass rush to be as good as advertised. Williams' replacement might not be finalized until true freshmen Mike and Ralph Brown (no relation) begin practicing.

Special teams: Kicker Kris Brown and punter Jesse Kosch debuted exceptionally well last season. Brown set a freshman school scoring record (97 points) and Kosch averaged 40.3 yards per punt.

Key to success: Frost doesn't have to be Tommie Frazier reincarnate at quarterback, but he does have to offer some versatility. Failing that, the Huskers will have to tailor their offense to Frost, which probably isn't the option coach Tom Osborne

BIG 12

Conference Rank: 1

By KIRK BOHLS and B.G. BROOKS

PREDICTIONS

NORTH DIVISION

1. NEBRASKA
2. COLORADO
3. KANSAS STATE
4. KANSAS
5. MISSOURI
6. IOWA STATE

SOUTH DIVISION

1. TEXAS
2. TEXAS A&M
3. BAYLOR
4. TEXAS TECH
5. OKLAHOMA
6. OKLAHOMA STATE

has in mind.

Outlook: Once again, Nebraska is loaded. September offers three decent tuneups for the Big 12 opener at Kansas State, but don't be stunned if the Huskers roll unbeaten into the Thanksgiving weekend game against Colorado. They'll win that game, too, and roll into St. Louis for the inaugural Big 12 championship game. From there, who knows?

CORNHUSKERS DATA

Coach: Tom Osborne (231-47-3, 23 years).

1995 record: 12-0 (beat Florida in Fiesta Bowl). Big Eight: 7-0/1st.

Key losses: Reggie Baul, SE; Doug Colman, MLB; Phil Ellis, MLB; Tommie Frazier, QB; Mark Gilman, TE; Aaron Graham, C; Clester Johnson, WB; Jeff Makovicka, FB; Steve Ott, G; Christian Peter, DT; Lawrence Phillips, RB (declared for NFL draft); Tony Veland, FS; Tyrone Williams, CB.

Starters returning: **Offense (4):** Eric Anderson, T, 6-4/300, Jr.; Chris Dishman, G (moved from T), 6-3/310, Sr.; Ahman Green, RB, 6-0/210, Soph.; Aaron Taylor, C (moved from G), 6-1/305, Jr. **Defense (7):** Michael Booker, CB, 6-2/205, Sr.; Terrell Farley, OLB, 6-1/205, Sr.; Jay Foreman, ILB (moved from OLB), 6-1/225, Soph.; Mike Minter, S, 5-10/190, Sr.; Jason Peter, T, 6-4/285, Jr.; Jared Tomich, E, 6-2/260, Sr.; Grant Wistrom, E, 6-5/250, Jr. **Kickers (2):** Kris Brown, K, 5-11/200, Soph.; Jesse Kosch, P, 6-0/185, Jr.

Other key returnees: Damon Benning, RB, Sr.; Tim Carpenter, TE, Jr.; Mike Fullman, CB, Sr.; Jon Hesse, MLB, Sr.; Brendan Holbein, SE, Sr.; Sheldon Jackson, TE, Soph.; Chad Kelsay, DE, Soph.; Jeff Ogard, DT, Sr.; Scott Saltsman, DT, Sr.; Brian Schuster, FB, Sr.; James Sims, RB, Jr.; Eric Stokes, FS, Sr.; Adam Treu, OT, Sr.; Matt Turman, QB, Sr.; Jon Vedral, WB, Sr.; Eric Warfield, FS, Jr.; Jamel Williams, OLB, Sr.; Jon Zatechka, G, Jr.

Top newcomers: Mike Brown, DB, Fr.; Ralph Brown, DB, Fr.; DeAngelo Evans, RB, Fr.; Scott Frost, QB, Jr. (transfer/Stanford); Tony Ortiz, OLB, Fr. (RS); Jerome Peterson, CB, Fr. (RS); James Sherman, G, Fr. (RS).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Green (141 att., 1,086 yds., 13 TD); **Passing:** Turman (12 att., 4 comp., 2 INT, 1 TD, 73 yds.); **Receiving:** Vedral (14 rec., 272 yds., 5 TD); **Tackles:** Farley (62); **Sacks:** Tomich (10).

Site: Lincoln, Neb. **Stadium:** Memorial (72,700).

Last league title won: 1995.

SCHEDULE

Sept. 7—Michigan State	Oct. 26—Kansas
Sept. 21—at Arizona State	Nov. 2—at Oklahoma
Sept. 28—Colorado State	Nov. 9—Missouri
Oct. 5—at Kansas State	Nov. 16—at Iowa State
Oct. 12—Baylor	Nov. 29—Colorado
Oct. 19—at Texas Tech	

2. COLORADO

Offensive strengths: The Buffaloes have three strong arms and five pairs of supple hands. Two quarterbacks (Koy Detmer and John Hessler) and five receivers (tight end Matt Lepsis and wide receivers Rae Carruth, James Kidd, Phil Savoy and Chris Anderson) combined for 173 pass completions, 2,671 yards and 23 touchdowns last season.

Offensive weaknesses: The middle is muddled with the loss of four-year starting center Bryan Stoltenberg and three-year starting left guard Heath Irwin. Expect Northwestern transfer Adam Reed to succeed Stoltenberg and Kyle Smith, a former left tackle, to succeed Irwin.

Defensive strengths: Middle linebacker Matt Russell, who finished fourth in voting for the Butkus Award in 1995, is a big-time talent. So are the guys on either side of him. The weakside strong man is Hannibal Navies, up to 240 pounds and still consistently at 4.3/4.4 seconds in the 40-yard dash. Allen Wilbon, Ron Merkersen and Mike Phillips also started at linebacker at one time or another last season.

Defensive weaknesses: The line is undersized. The starting tackles figure to be Ryan Olson (6-2, 255) and Viliami Maumau (6-2, 290), but at least two incoming freshmen (Jesse Warren and Sean Jarne) could challenge.

Special teams: This could be a problem area. The punting game was kicked around badly in 1995 (five blocks and a net average of 32.1 yards). It's time for incumbent Andy Mitchell to step up or step aside. With steady Neil Voskeritchian graduated, placement duties fall to Jason Lesley, who kicked off most of the time last season. The kickoff return team also needs work.



JOHN WILLIAMSON

Senior guard Chris Naeole is the only returning starter in Colorado's interior line.

Key to success: Developing a bigger, physical defensive line. With Nebraska in the same division, Colorado can't reach the league title game this season (or any other) if it can't stand up to the Huskers' running game.

Outlook: As usual, the Buffs have a boom-or-bust schedule that could put them in the national championship picture very early—or take them right out of it. A year in the 4-3 should allow for defensive improvement if corners Dalton Simmons, back from reconstructive knee surgery, and Kenny Wilkins hold up. A healthy Detmer and the wide-open, blurring-fast offense will be every defensive coordinator's nightmare—except Nebraska's.

BUFFALOES DATA

Coach: Rick Neuheisel (10-2, 1 year).

1995 record: 10-2 (beat Oregon in Cotton Bowl). Big Eight: 5-2/T2nd.

Key losses: T.J. Cunningham, CB; Kerry Hicks, DT; Heath Irwin, G; Donnell Leomiti, SS; Daryl Price, DE; Bryan Stollenberg, C; Neil Voskeritchian, K.

Starters returning: **Offense (9):** Rae Carruth, WR, 5-11/190, Sr.; John Hessler, QB, 6-2/195, Jr.; James Kidd, WR, 5-8/160, Sr.; Matt Leipsis, TE, 5-6/265, Sr.; Chris Naeole, G, 6-4/295, Sr.; Phil Savoy, WR, 6-3/200, Jr.; Kyle Smith, T, 6-6/285, Sr.; Melvin Thomas, T, 6-3/285 Jr.; Herchell Troutman, TB, 5-7/180, Jr. **Defense (7):** Greg Jones, E, 6-4/240, Sr.; Ron Merkerson, OLB, 6-3/240, Jr.; Ryan Olson, NT, 6-2/255, Jr.; Mike Phillips, OLB, 6-4/215, Jr.; Steve Rosga, FS, 6-1/210, Sr.; Matt Russell, ILB, 6-2/240, Sr.; Kenny Wilkins, CB, 6-3/210, Sr. **Kickers (1):** Andy Mitchell, P, 6-3/190, Jr.

Other key returnees: Chris Anderson, WR, Jr.; Marlon Barnes, TB, Jr.; Ryan Black, SS, Jr.; Elton Davis, CB, Jr.; Koy Detmer, QB, Sr.; Lendon Henry, TB, Jr.; Jason Lesley, K, Jr.; Aaron Marshall, DE, Soph.; Vilami Maumau, DT, Jr.; Tennyson McCarty, TE, Jr.; Hannibal Navies, OLB, Soph.; Ben Nichols, OT, Jr. (RS/back); Clifton Peters, ILB, Soph.; Dalton Simmons, CB, Sr. (RS/knee); Kyle Smith, G (from T), Sr.; Brandon Southward, OLB, Soph.; Andrew Welsh, OT, Jr.; Allen Wilbon, OLB, Sr.; Nick Ziegler, DE, Soph.

Top newcomers: Tyronee Bussey, DE, Fr. (RS); Dwayne Cherrington, TB, Fr. (RS); Shane Cook, OT, Fr. (RS); Kane Cullum, OT, Fr. (RS); Sean Jarne, DT, Fr.; Ryan Johannmeier, G, Fr. (RS); Corey Kish, G, Fr. (RS); Adam Reed, C, Soph. (transfer/Northwestern); Jesse Warren, DL, Fr.; Jeremy Weisinger, QB, Fr. (RS).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Troutman (171 att., 826 yds., 5 TD); **Passing:** Hessler (266 att., 154 comp., 9 INT, 20 TD, 2,136 yds.); **Receiving:** Carruth (53 rec., 1,008 yds., 9 TD); **Tackles:** Russell (119); **Sacks:** Jones (8).

Site: Boulder, Colo. **Stadium:** Folsom Field (51,808).

Last league title won: 1991.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—Washington State	Oct. 26—Texas
Sept. 7—at Colorado State	Nov. 2—at Missouri
Sept. 14—Michigan	Nov. 9—Iowa State
Sept. 28—at Texas A&M	Nov. 16—Kansas State
Oct. 12—Oklahoma State	Nov. 29—at Nebraska
Oct. 19—at Kansas	

3. KANSAS STATE

Offensive strengths: In center Jason Johnson and guards Kendyl Jacox and Ross Greenwood, K-State has one of the Big 12's meanest middles. Those three have started a combined 56 games over the past two seasons and opened the holes for 1,893 rushing yards in '95—a 13-year K-State high. The top three tailbacks return.

Offensive weaknesses: Who will catch the passes? A stable of fine receivers is down to Kevin Lockett, a senior All-American candidate who last season had Mitch Running and Tyson Schwiager to share the load. Also gone are the top two tight ends, who were big factors as blockers.

Defensive strengths: Corners Chris Canty and Joe Gordon and free safety Mario Smith make the secondary second



K-State quarterback Brian Kavanagh needs a carryover from his performance in the Holiday Bowl.

to none; they were a big reason K-State led the Big Eight in pass defense last season. Canty and Gordon are the best pair of corners in the nation. Watch for all three to earn postseason honors.

Defensive weaknesses: Three line starters must be replaced, no small feat considering tackles Tim Colston and Ray Eagle and end Dirk Ochs accounted for 24 of the Wildcats' 38 sacks and helped them lead the nation in total defense (250.8 yards a game). In addition, both defensive co-coordinators are gone.

Special teams: Running, who holds the K-State single-season record for punt-return yardage, will be missed. But no one else will. The top two punters and top two kickers return, including junior kicker Martin Gramatica (13-of-19 career).

Key to success: Bill Snyder's pro-style offense puts a premium on quarterback play. Can Brian Kavanagh resume the pace that made him the Holiday Bowl's MVP in relief of injured (and graduated) Matt Miller? Yes, and a third consecutive nine-victory season is possible. No, and a September scramble starts at quarterback.

Outlook: In the past, Snyder scheduled September wins that set the tempo for Big Eight victories to follow. Should K-State defeat Texas Tech on August 31, it should be 4-0 when Nebraska visits Manhattan on October 5. But don't expect an upset then—or a victory at Colorado a month later—unless able replacements surface on the defensive line and Kavanagh gets hot. For all their improvement, Snyder's Wildcats still seek breakthrough wins against Nebraska and Colorado.

WILDCATS DATA

Coach: Bill Snyder (46-33-1, 7 years).

1995 record: 10-2 (beat Colorado State in Holiday Bowl). Big Eight: 5-2/T2nd.

Key losses: Tim Colston, DT; David Damon, LB (could return to team in fall); Ray Eagle, DT; Percell Gaskins, LB; Scott Heun, OT; Brian Lojka, TE; Chuck Marlowe, SS; Matt Miller, QB; Dirk Ochs, DE; Chris Oltmanns, OT; Mitch Running, WR; Tyson Schwiager, WR.

Starters returning: **Offense (5):** Ross Greenwood, G, 6-4/300, Sr.; Eric Hickson, RB, 5-10/195, Jr.; Kendyl Jacox, G,

6-2/320, Jr.; Jason Johnson, C, 6-3/275, Sr.; Kevin Lockett, WR, 6-1/180, Sr. **Defense (6):** Chris Canty, CB, 5-10/190, Jr.; DeShawn Fogle, LB, 6-2/235, Sr.; Joe Gordon, CB, 5-9/180, Sr.; Travis Ochs, LB, 6-3/225, Soph.; Mario Smith, FS, 6-0/190, Sr.; Nyle Wren, E, 6-1/250, Sr. **Kickers (2):** James Garcia, P, 6-2/195, Soph.; Martin Gramatica, K, 5-9/160, Jr.

Other key returnees: Jimmy Dean, WR, Sr.; Jarrett Grosdidier, TE, Jr.; Clyde Johnson, CB, Sr.; Brian Kavanagh, QB, Sr.; Mike Lawrence, RB, Jr.; Jeremy Martin, G, Soph.; Monty Spiller, SS, Jr.; Brock Stefan, DT (moved from G), Sr.; Thad Swazer, DE, Sr.; Andrew Timmons, DT, Sr.; Todd Weiner, OT, Jr.; Jabbar Williams, LB, Sr.; Ryan Young, OT, Soph.

Top newcomers: Jonathan Beasley, QB, Fr.; Kenneth Bouie, DT, Jr. (JC); Lamar Chapman, SS, Fr. (RS); Jerome Evans, DT, Jr. (JC); Brian Goolsby, FB, Fr. (RS); Lance Grace, DT, Fr. (RS); Jason Hogaboom, DT, Fr. (RS); Darren Howard, DE, Fr. (RS); Damian McIntosh, OT, Fr. (RS); Cody Lee Smith, QB, Jr. (JC/RS/illness).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Hickson (158 att., 816 yds., 8 TD); **Passing:** Kavanagh (58 att., 36 comp., 1 INT, 5 TD, 437 yds.); **Receiving:** Lockett (56 rec., 797 yds., 13 TD); **Tackles:** Smith (95); **Sacks:** Wren (8).

Site: Manhattan, Kan. **Stadium:** KSU (42,000).

Last league title won: 1934.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—Texas Tech	Oct. 19—at Texas A&M
Sept. 7—Indiana State	Oct. 26—Oklahoma
Sept. 14—Cincinnati	Nov. 9—at Kansas
Sept. 21—at Rice	Nov. 16—at Colorado
Oct. 5—Nebraska	Nov. 23—Iowa State
Oct. 12—at Missouri	

4. KANSAS

Offensive strengths: After sharing carries with L.T. Levine, June Henley becomes the feature back in a running attack that produced 206.9 yards a game and 21 touchdowns last season. And there's more firepower from tight end Jim Moore, who should be one of the Big 12's top blockers and receivers this season.

Offensive weaknesses: Glen Mason would like to clone 290-pound sophomore guard Cleve Roberts. Mason doesn't have enough players like him. A lack of line depth could cripple the running game if injuries strike. Quarterback also is a question following the departure of Mark Williams. Holdover Ben Rutz threw just 19 passes last year and is coming off knee surgery.

Defensive strengths: Crushing hitters like linebackers Ronnie Ward, on the Butkus watch list last season until suffering a shoulder injury, and Jason Thoren and safeties Maurice Gaddie and Tony Blevins have toughened the KU defense. So has the addition of coordinator Mike Hankwitz, who arrived from Colorado last season.

Defensive weaknesses: Depth and size up front. If Hankwitz has to go any deeper than starting down linemen Dewayne Houston, Kevin Kopp and Brett McGraw, he might wish he was back in Boulder. And the secondary will miss all-conference corner Dorian Brew.

Special teams: At 42.4 yards a kick, Kansas' punting game was the Big Eight's second-best in '95. Maintaining it likely falls to JC transfer Dean Royal. Steady placement specialist Jeff McCord (9-for-12 on field-goal attempts) is back.

Key to success: The marked offensive improvement that pushed Kansas to a 10-2 record and 51-30 Aloha Bowl rout of UCLA came thanks to the versatility of Williams at quarterback. Rutz, who spent two years at Nebraska before transferring to Kansas, must keep the Jayhawks two-dimensional.

Outlook: Mason knew what he was doing when he changed his mind about taking

PRESEASON All-BIG 12 TEAM

PLAYERS OF THE YEAR

OFFENSE



KOY DETMER
QB, Colorado

DEFENSE



TERRELL FARLEY
LB, Nebraska

NEWCOMERS OF THE YEAR

OFFENSE: Brannndon Stewart, QB, Texas A&M
DEFENSE: Jesse Warren, DL, Colorado

FIRST TEAM

OFFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
WR	RAE CARRUTH, Colorado	5-11/190	Sr.
WR	MIKE ADAMS, Texas	6-1/187	Sr.
TE	STEPHEN ALEXANDER, Oklahoma	6-4/225	Jr.
T	ERIC ANDERSON, Nebraska	6-4/300	Jr.
T	DAVID DAVIS, Baylor	6-4/308	Sr.
G	CHRIS NAEOLE, Colorado	6-4/295	Sr.
G	DAN NEIL, Texas	6-2/285	Sr.
C	AARON TAYLOR, Nebraska	6-1/305	Jr.
QB	KOY DETMER, Colorado	6-1/185	Sr.
RB	TROY DAVIS, Iowa State	5-8/190	Jr.
RB	AHMAN GREEN, Nebraska	6-0/210	Soph.

DEFENSE

E	GRANT WISTROM, Nebraska	6-5/250	Jr.
NT	CHRIS AKINS, Texas	6-1/292	Jr.
E	BRANDON MITCHELL, Texas A&M	6-4/275	Sr.
LB	TERRELL FARLEY, Nebraska	6-1/205	Sr.
LB	MATT RUSSELL, Colorado	6-2/240	Sr.
LB	TYRELL PETERS, Oklahoma	6-0/210	Sr.
LB	KEITH MITCHELL, Texas A&M	6-3/223	Sr.
CB	CHRIS CANTY, Kansas State	5-10/190	Jr.
CB	BRYANT WESTBROOK, Texas	6-0/195	Sr.
S	CHRIS CARTER, Texas	6-1/200	Sr.
S	MIKE MINTER, Nebraska	5-10/190	Sr.

SPECIALISTS

K	PHIL DAWSON, Texas	5-11/187	Jr.
P	MARC HARRIS, Iowa State	5-11/202	Sr.
KR	R.W. MCQUARTERS, Oklahoma St.	5-11/185	Soph.

SECOND TEAM

OFFENSE

WR	KEVIN LOCKETT, Kansas State	6-1/180	Sr.
WR	ALBERT CONNELL, Texas A&M	6-2/180	Sr.
TE	PAT FITZGERALD, Texas	6-2/225	Sr.
T	TIM KOHN, Iowa State	6-5/307	Sr.
T	BEN KAUFMAN, Texas Tech	6-5/274	Sr.
G	CHRIS DISHMAN, Nebraska	6-3/310	Sr.
G	CALVIN COLLINS, Texas A&M	6-3/290	Sr.
C	JASON JOHNSON, Kansas State	6-3/275	Sr.
QB	JAMES BROWN, Texas	6-0/186	Jr.
RB	JEROD DOUGLAS, Baylor	5-9/173	Jr.
RB	BYRON HANSPARD, Texas Tech	6-0/190	Jr.

DEFENSE

E	GREG JONES, Colorado	6-4/240	Sr.
T	JASON PETER, Nebraska	6-4/285	Jr.
E	JARED TOMICH, Nebraska	6-2/260	Sr.
LB	ROBERT JOHNSON, Texas Tech	5-11/186	Sr.
LB	DAT NGUYEN, Texas A&M	6-1/213	Soph.
LB	JASON THOREN, Kansas	6-2/230	Jr.
LB	DEAN JACKSON, Baylor	6-1/222	Jr.
CB	JOE GORDON, Kansas State	5-9/180	Sr.
CB	DONOVAN GREER, Texas A&M	5-10/178	Sr.
S	MARIO SMITH, Kansas State	6-0/190	Sr.
S	STEVE ROSGA, Colorado	6-1/210	Sr.

SPECIALISTS

K	JEREMY ALEXANDER, Oklahoma	5-10/180	Jr.
P	MARK SCHULTIS, Texas	6-1/195	Jr.
KR	DANE JOHNSON, Texas Tech	5-11/181	Jr.

the Georgia job. Kansas could be the North Division's sleeper—for the runner-up spot, that is. While the schedule's major pothole is an October 26 visit to Lincoln, Colorado and Kansas State are coming to Lawrence. The Jayhawks won in Boulder (40-24) last season but were routed in Manhattan (41-7).

JAYHAWKS DATA

Coach: Glen Mason (43-47-1, 8 years; 55-57-1 overall, 10 years).

1995 record: 10-2 (beat UCLA in Aloha Bowl). Big Eight: 5-2/T2nd.

Key losses: Chris Banks, G; Dorian Brew, CB; Dick Holt, LB; Rod Jones, OT; L.T. Levine, RB; Keith Rodgers, OLB; Darrin Simmons, P; Ashaundai Smith, WR; Mark Williams, QB.

Starters returning: **Offense (7):** Isaac Byrd, WR, 6-2/180, Sr.; June Henley, RB, 5-11/205, Sr.; Jim Moore, TE, 6-3/260, Sr.; Cleve Roberts, G, 6-6/290, Soph.; Jared Smith, C, 6-1/265, Sr.; Jim Stiebel, G, 6-2/275, Sr.; Scott Whittaker, T, 6-6/290, Sr. **Defense (8):** Maurice Gaddie, SS, 5-9/185, Jr.; Freddie Hammonds, OLB, 6-2/210, Soph.; Jamie Harris, CB, 5-10/175, Soph.; Dewey Houston, T, 6-4/255, Jr.; Chris Jones, OLB, 6-2/235, Sr.; Kevin Kopp, T, 6-4/260, Sr.; Brett McGraw, NT, 6-1/280, Jr.; Jason Thoren, ILB, 6-2/230, Jr. **Kickers (1):** Jeff McCord, K, 5-9/215, Jr.

Other key returnees: Michael Allen, FS, Soph.; Tony Blevins, FS (moved from CB), Sr. (RS/knee); Patrick Brown, OLB, Soph.; Andre Carter, WR, Sr.; Charles Davis, SS, Jr.; Dan Dercher, DT, Soph.; Avery Randle, CB, Jr.; Ben Rutz, QB, Sr.; Mark Sanders, RB, Sr.; Lamar Sharpe, OLB, Soph. (RS/injury); Eric Vann, RB, Jr.; Ronnie Ward, ILB, Sr. (RS/shoulder).

Top newcomers: Ishmeal Knight, OL, Fr.; Dariss Lomax, OLB, Fr.; Reggie Moore, WR, Fr. (RS); Dean Royal, P, Jr. (JC); Ron Warner, OLB, Jr. (JC); Bonnie Willis, TE, Soph. (Prop 48).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Henley (158 att., 766 yds., 8 TD); **Passing:** Rutz (19 att., 8 comp., 1 INT, 0 TD, 92 yds.); **Receiving:** Byrd (48 rec., 604 yds., 5 TD); **Tackles:** Thoren (119); **Sacks:** Dercher (4.5).

Site: Lawrence, Kan. **Stadium:** Memorial (50,250).
Last league title won: 1968.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 29—Ball State	Oct. 26—at Nebraska
Sept. 14—at TCU	Nov. 2—at Iowa State
Sept. 28—at Utah	Nov. 9—Kansas State
Oct. 5—at Oklahoma	Nov. 16—Texas
Oct. 12—Texas Tech	Nov. 23—at Missouri
Oct. 19—Colorado	

5. MISSOURI

Offensive strengths: Larry Smith's pound 'em/punish 'em running game finally might be close to making an appearance in Columbia. Smith figures tailbacks Brock Olivo and Devin West can be utilized in more versatile sets, while their power running could flourish behind center Russ Appel and left tackle Travis Biebel.

Offensive weaknesses: Receivers. Rumor has it the Tigers couldn't catch a bus. After one early spring practice, the receiving corps stayed around to catch 500 balls. No word on how long that took. The lone returning starter is senior Lou Shepherd.

Defensive strengths: The Big 12 is stocked with good secondaries, and one will be Mizzou's. Corners Shad Criss and Clayton Baker and safety DeMontie Cross, who had offseason knee surgery, are being touted as the best in Columbia in a couple of decades. These Tigers won't be easy targets.

Defensive weaknesses: That super secondary might have to make the bulk of the tackles. As well as replacing nose tackle Steve Martin and the rest of the defensive line, Mizzou must strengthen its line-backing corps. It might be done with two JC transfers (Matt Hawkes and Sam Josue).

Special teams: Many happy returns, Mizzou. Kenyetta Williams was third in the conference last season returning kickoffs

(20.6-yard average) and Baker was fourth in punt returns. And Criss' speed (4.25) makes him a candidate to do either job. Mizzou was seventh in net punting (33.6) in '95; expect newcomer Vince Sebo to challenge incumbent Jason Smith.

Key to success: Developing a passing game. Smith might have his running game on the right track, but another 104th-in-the-nation finish in passing offense (101.7 yards a game, six total touchdown passes) won't allow his team to win many Big 12 games.

Outlook: The Tigers lost six of their final seven games, but in the last month they actually began resembling a Big Eight team. Now they've got to resemble a Big 12 team—and that will be a problem for the old league's second-tier teams in inter-divisional play. Missouri could match last season's 3-8 finish and actually be improved.

TIGERS DATA

Coach: Larry Smith (6-16-1, 2 years; 116-96-7 overall, 19 years).

1995 record: 3-8. Big Eight: 1-6/T7th.

Key losses: Bo Adams, SS; Chris Barrows, G/C; Kay Blake, OLB; Chris Buck, OT; Brandon Corso, QB; Pat Ivey, DT; Steve Martin, NT; Jon Sanft, DT.

Starters returning: **Offense (11):** Russ Appel, C, 6-3/255, Sr.; Travis Biebel, T, 6-4/265, Jr.; Ernest Blackwell, FB, 6-3/249, Jr.; Eddie Brooks, WR, 6-1/204, Soph.; Corby Jones, QB, 6-1/216, Soph.; Bill Lingerfelt, TE, 6-4/249, Sr.; Mike Morris, G, 6-3/281, Jr.; Brock Olivo, TB, 6-1/210, Jr.; Lou Shepherd, WR, 6-0/214, Sr.; Cliff Smith, G, 6-5/264, Soph.; Martez Young, WR, 6-1/182, Soph. **Defense (7):** Clayton Baker, CB, 5-10/176, Sr.; Darryl Chatman, LB, 6-1/245, Sr.; Brian Cracraft, E, 6-3/249, Jr.; Shad Criss, CB, 5-10/173, Jr.; DeMontie Cross, FS, 6-4/209, Sr.; Joe Love, LB, 6-2/220, Sr.; Tim Mittelstadt, T, 6-6/253, Soph. **Kickers (2):** Mark Norris, K, 6-3/188, Sr.; Jason Smith, P, 5-9/163, Soph.

Other key returnees: Caldronoff Easter, SS, Soph.; Kevin Ford, LB, Jr.; Ron Jones, FB, Jr.; Rahsetnu Jenkins, WR, Sr.; Harold Piersey, FS, Soph.; Randy Potter, CB, Soph.; Kent

THE PRESSURE'S ON

All Cornhuskers' Frost must do is replace Frazier

Scott Frost might turn out to be proof that you can go home again. But then Frost has yet to run his first option or direct his first touchdown drive in Nebraska's filled-and-frenzied Memorial Stadium.

Frost hails from Wood River, Neb., but adoring fans might not celebrate his homecoming if their beloved Big Red Machine, a model of efficiency under Tommie Frazier during back-to-back national title seasons, suddenly stalls. History suggests Huskers fans can overlook many indiscretions, except perhaps losing.



Frost

Frost, a junior transfer who sat out last season after leaving Stanford, snubbed Nebraska's courtship after high school to sign on with then-Cardinal coach Bill Walsh. In offensive philosophy, Nebraska and Stanford are in different solar systems. Not to worry, insists Frost. He says he can run Nebraska's offense without altering his style. "Yeah, I'm going to have to adapt," he says, "but the coaches are going to have to adapt a little."

Frost's transfer season allowed him to acclimate himself to life and football in Lincoln, but it had its rough spots. He wound up in the middle of the Lawrence Phillips saga when the girl he was dating, Huskers basketball player Kate McEwen, was attacked by Phillips. Phillips was McEwen's former boyfriend. Frost is reluctant to discuss the episode, saying, "The situation with Lawrence is behind us and behind me. Hopefully, we can avoid any problems like that this year."

At most positions except quarterback, the Huskers are deep enough to win a third consecutive national title. Frost faced spring competition from senior Matt Turman and junior Monte Christo, a pair of overachieving former scout-teamers. Shoulder surgery clouds the quarterback plans of touted redshirt freshman Frankie London.

So, whether by default or design, the job falls to the 6-3, 215-pound Frost, who remains undaunted over the prospect. Rather than pressure, Frost senses "a great opportunity to come in with the kind of team we have. Tommie Frazier did his own thing; the person who plays next will be his own quarterback. Sure, there will be comparisons. But people have to remember there's a different person running things."

As long as the winning continues, will anyone in Nebraska notice?

—B.G. BROOKS



Safety DeMontie Cross, who made 144 tackles last season, is part of a solid Missouri secondary.

Skornia, QB, Soph.; Jake Stueve, TE, Soph.; Devin West, TB, Soph.; Kenyetta Williams, TB, Sr.; Justin Wyatt, DE, Soph.
Top newcomers: Torey Coleman, WR, Jr. (JC); Matt Hawkes, LB, Jr. (JC); Sam Josue, LB, Jr. (JC); Kent Layman, WR, Fr. (RS); Jeff Marriott, DT, Fr. (RS); John McArthur, QB, Fr. (RS); Barry Odom, LB, Fr.; Ricardo Rhodes, TB, Fr.; Ricky Ross, WR, Jr. (JC); Vince Sebo, P, Fr.; Stephen Scott, CB, Fr. (RS).
Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Olivo (232 att., 985 yds., 6 TD); Passing: Skornia (53 att., 22 comp., 2 INT, 2 TD, 230 yds.); Receiving: Olivo (17 rec., 101 yds., 0 TD); Tackles: Cross (144); Sacks: Wyatt (2).
 Site: Columbia, Mo. Stadium: Memorial (62,000).
 Last league title won: 1969.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—at Texas	Oct. 26—Oklahoma State
Sept. 14—Memphis	Nov. 2—Colorado
Sept. 21—Clemson	Nov. 9—at Nebraska
Sept. 28—at Iowa State	Nov. 16—at Baylor
Oct. 5—at SMU	Nov. 23—Kansas
Oct. 12—Kansas State	

6. IOWA STATE

Offensive strengths: Diminutive tailback Troy Davis skittered into Heisman Trophy consideration with 2,010 rushing yards last season. Given a year of seasoning and weight work, and another chance to run behind 300-pounders Tim Kohn and Pat Augafa, Davis could have another monster year.

Offensive weaknesses: Refresh our memory. Did the Cyclones have a passing game in 1995? They ranked 96th nationally in passing offense (132.9 yards a game), and only one of their returning wide receivers caught more than five passes. That receiver, Ed Williams, is a comer, but quarterbacks Todd Doxzon and Todd Bandhauer won't scare any Big 12 defenses.

Defensive strengths: Very few. Perhaps seven returning starters offer an experienced base, but then Iowa State was last in the Big Eight in rushing defense, scoring defense and total defense last year. Senior Jeff St. Clair, the starting quarterback in Iowa State's first two games last fall, is being moved to the secondary.

Defensive weaknesses: Where do you start? Practicing against Davis last fall might have done irreparable damage to the Cyclones' ability to stop the run. Something did. Yielding 296.6 rushing

yards a game, Iowa State finished last nationally (108th). When spring practice opened, there wasn't a senior among the first 10 players in the five-position defensive front.

Special teams: Punter Marc Harris will be among the Big 12's best, and given the Cyclones' defensive shortcomings, he'll have to be. Jamie Kohl was successful on 10-of-17 field-goal attempts. Not surprisingly, the Cyclones return few punts (seven last season) and lots of kickoffs (56).

Key to success: Fielding at least a semblance of a defense. Is it any wonder that 14 of the Cyclones' 25 scholarships went to defensive players? Several of them must arrive in Ames ready to rumble.

Outlook: The best-case scenario for Iowa State fans might be a rerun of Dan McCarney's 3-8 debut season. Then again, if a defense is discovered and Doxzon stays healthy enough to recharge the passing game, the Cyclones might up the ante to four wins. Any more than that and McCarney reaches coach-of-the-year territory.

CYCLONES DATA

Coach: Dan McCarney (3-8, 1 year).

1995 record: 3-8. Big Eight: 1-6/7th.

Key losses: Kevin Fleecs, OLB; Byron Heitz, OT; Mike Horacek, WR; Mark Konopka, G; Angelo Provenza, OLB; Jason Putz, DT; Matt Straight, SS.

Starters returning: Offense (8): Pat Augafa, C, 6-3/330, Sr.; Troy Davis, TB, 5-8/190, Jr.; Dennis DiBiase, TE, 6-2/245, Sr.; Todd Doxzon, QB, 6-1/191, Sr.; Doug Easley, G, 6-2/282, Sr.; Rodney Guggenheim, FB, 5-10/228, Sr.; Tim Kohn, T, 6-5/307, Sr.; Ed Williams, WR, 6-3/197, Jr. Defense (7): Dawan Anderson, CB, 5-8/164, Soph.; Michael Cooper, OLB, 6-1/202, Jr.; Kevin Hudson, CB, 6-0/175, Jr.; Mike Lincavage, FS, 6-1/202, Sr.; Rudy Ruffolo, T, 6-3/268, Jr.; Tim Sanders, ILB, 6-0/222, Sr.; Greg Schoon, T, 6-4/280, Jr. Kickers (2): Marc Harris, P, 5-11/202, Sr.; Jamie Kohl, K, 6-0/187, Soph.

Other key returnees: Chin Achebe, DE, Soph.; Todd Bandhauer, QB, Soph.; Gerrick Bivins, WR, Jr.; Jason Brown, FS, Sr.; Kemp Knighten, CB, Soph. (RS/injury); Andre Lee, ILB, Jr.; Kurt Levetzow, OT, Jr.; Kelvin Moore, SS, Sr.; Graston Norris, TB, Sr.; Joe Parmentier, FB, Soph.; Matt Rahlfaldt, G, Jr.; Jeff St. Clair, SS, Sr.; Tracy Williams, SS, Jr.; Kevin Wilson, CB, Soph.

Top newcomers: Eugene Bernal, OL, Jr. (JC); Dave Brcka, ILB, Fr. (RS); Derrick Clark, ILB, Jr. (JC); Joe Cominsky, DE, Fr. (RS); Gene David, DL, Jr. (JC); Darren Davis, RB, Fr.; Bill Marsau, DT, Fr. (RS); Brandon Rutledge, OLB, Fr. (RS); Terry

Thomas, DT, Fr. (RS); Tyrone Watley, WR, Sr. (transfer/Pacific).

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Davis (345 att., 2,010 yds., 15 TD); Passing: Doxzon (100 att., 58 comp., 4 INT, 4 TD, 730 yds.); Receiving: Williams (46 rec., 639 yds., 7 TD); Tackles: Lincavage (109); Sacks: Ruffolo (3).
Site: Ames, Iowa. **Stadium:** Cyclone (43,000).
Last league title won: 1912.

SCHEDULE

Sept. 7—Wyoming	Oct. 26—at Baylor
Sept. 14—at Iowa	Nov. 2—Kansas
Sept. 21—Northern Iowa	Nov. 9—at Colorado
Sept. 28—Missouri	Nov. 16—Nebraska
Oct. 12—Texas A&M	Nov. 23—at Kansas State
Oct. 19—at Oklahoma State	

B.G. Brooks covers the Big 12 for the Rocky Mountain News.

SOUTH DIVISION

1. TEXAS

Offensive strengths: The Longhorns might have the best quarterback in the Big 12 in versatile James Brown. He sat out the spring with loose ligaments in his shoulder and should be better in the short- and mid-range passing attack. Swift Shon Mitchell and powerful Ricky Williams form an outstanding 1-2 backfield tandem. Sure-handed wide receiver Mike Adams could be a first-round NFL pick.

Offensive weaknesses: Despite having one of the best guards in the nation in senior Dan Neil, Texas has a revamped offensive line long on potential and short on experience. The move of backup right tackle Octavious Bishop to the left side is key.

Defensive strengths: Cornerbacks Bryant Westbrook and Taje Allen and safeties Chris Carter and Tre Thomas, all seniors, rank among the nation's elite. Inside linebacker Tyson King won't wow you, but he makes plays. Strongman Chris Akins could be the top nose tackle in the nation.

Defensive weaknesses: Texas will experiment with the 4-3 even though it has little experience up front and will have to rely heavily on freshmen. The Longhorns are hoping redshirt freshman Damon Luckett can handle the rush linebacker spot.

Special teams: Until he needed knee surgery in the spring (making him questionable for the opener), Phil Dawson could have been touted as perhaps the best kicker in the country. He made four 50-yard field goals last year, including one into a 20-mph wind to beat Virginia on the last play. Punter Mark Schultis is a little better than average.

Keys to success: Texas signed four high school All-American defensive linemen, and at least two of them will have to contribute immediately if the Longhorns are to retain the aggressive, attack philosophy they adopted at midseason last year.

Outlook: The Longhorns are positioned well for entry into the Big 12. They played in a major bowl last season for the first time since the 1991 Cotton Bowl, and they return the major components of one of the most explosive offenses in school history. But they must offset the loss of defensive end Tony Brackens and heavily restock the defensive line and linebacker positions to contend for the conference title.

LONGHORNS DATA

Coach: John Mackovic (29-15-2, 4 years; 73-51-3 overall,



James Brown will be the guiding force behind what should be a very good Texas offense.

11 years).

1995 record: 10-2-1 (lost to Virginia Tech in Sugar Bowl).

SWC: 7-0/1st.

Key losses: Tony Brackens, DE (declared for NFL draft); Corby Brooks, G; Dominic Bustamante, OT; John Elmore, OT; Justin McElmore, WR; Robert Reed, OLB; Jason Reeves, OLB; Shane Rink, DT.

Starters returning: **Offense (7):** Mike Adams, WR, 6-1/187, Sr.; James Brown, QB, 6-0/186, Jr.; Ryan Fiebigler, C, 6-3/280, Jr.; Pat Fitzgerald, TE, 6-2/225, Sr.; Shon Mitchell, RB, 5-10/185, Sr.; Dan Neil, G, 6-2/285, Sr.; Ricky Williams, FB, 6-0/225, Soph. **Defense (7):** Chris Akins, NT, 6-1/292, Jr.; Taje Allen, CB, 5-11/188, Sr.; Chris Carter, FS, 6-1/200, Sr.; Tyson King, ILB, 6-0/230, Sr.; Kyle Richardson, ILB, 6-0/230, Jr.; Tre Thomas, SS, 6-2/210, Sr.; Bryant Westbrook, CB, 6-0/195, Sr. **Kickers (2):** Phil Dawson, K, 5-11/187, Jr.; Mark Schultis, P, 6-1/195, Jr.

Other key returnees: Ben Adams, G, Soph.; Octavious Bishop, OT, Soph.; Steve Bradley, TE, Sr.; Robert Crenshaw, SS, Sr.; Matt Davis, WR, Sr.; Jonathan Hickerson, OLB, Sr.; Priest Holmes, RB, Sr. (RS/knee); Jay Humphrey, OT, Soph.; Curtis Jackson, WR, Sr. (RS/knee); Matt Jones, LB, Jr. (RS); Clarence Martin, DT, Soph.; Gray Mosier, DT, Soph.

Top newcomers: Derrick Curry, DL, Fr.; Cortney Epps, WR, Jr. (transfer/Tennessee); Will Goodloe, DL, Fr.; Casey Hampton, DL, Fr.; Damon Luckett, OLB, Fr. (RS); Donald McCowen, DB, Fr.; Roger Roesler, OL, Fr.; Cedric Woodard, DL, Fr.

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Mitchell (176 att., 1,099 yds., 10 TD); Passing: Brown (322 att., 163 comp., 12 INT, 19 TD, 2,447 yds.); Receiving: Adams (53 rec., 876 yds., 3 TD); Tackles: King (137); Sacks: Akins, King (4).

Site: Austin, Texas. **Stadium:** Memorial (75,512).

Last league title won: 1995 (SWC).

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—Missouri	Oct. 26—at Colorado
Sept. 7—New Mexico State	Nov. 2—Baylor
Sept. 21—Notre Dame	Nov. 9—at Texas Tech
Sept. 28—at Virginia	Nov. 16—at Kansas
Oct. 5—Oklahoma State	Nov. 29—Texas A&M
Oct. 12—Oklahoma (at Dallas)	

2. TEXAS A&M

Offensive strengths: Despite losing a 3½-year starter at quarterback and a second-round draft choice at running back, the Aggies are set in the backfield. Tennessee transfer Brannndon Stewart has an outstanding arm as well as mobility at quarterback, and the RB trio of elusive Sirk Parker, powerful D'Andre Hardeman and scatback Eric Bernard—all sophomores—showed no dropoff from Leeland McElroy in the Alamo Bowl. Acrobatic wide receiver

Albert Connell will play on Sundays.

Offensive weaknesses: Despite returning four starters and allowing only nine sacks last season, the line remains mysteriously subpar at run blocking. A&M has two unproven tight ends who aren't that big or physical.

Defensive strengths: No team can match the tremendous depth, speed and ability the Aggies have at linebacker. Brandon Mitchell and Pat Williams are perfect bookends who can collapse a pocket.

Defensive weaknesses: If they have time, opponents will pass A&M silly. Both cornerbacks, Donovan Greer and Andre Williams, are coming off reconstructive knee surgery, and they weren't that great to start with. The safeties are workmanlike. **Special teams:** Kicker Kyle Bryant is coming off a miserable sophomore season in which he missed more field goals (eight) than he made (seven). But he was the Alamo Bowl MVP with five field goals in six attempts. A&M lost its punter and its holder when the latter skipped out for medical school. A former walk-on will snap.

Key to success: The Aggies must reach their three-year goal of becoming more diversified on offense and broaden their one-dimensional running attack.

Outlook: R.C. Slocum has won more games (68) in his first seven seasons than any modern-era coach other than Oklahoma's Barry Switzer (73). He has taken the Aggies to six bowls in that time; it would be seven but for NCAA probation. He finally has a big-time playmaker at quarterback in Stewart, who played in 11 games with the Volunteers as a freshman. The Aggies' defense, ranked third nationally last season, will suffer a slight dropoff against balanced teams but will mash most.

AGGIES DATA

Coach: R.C. Slocum (68-15-2, 7 years).

1995 record: 9-3 (beat Michigan in Alamo Bowl). **SWC:** 5-2/T2nd.

Key losses: Dennis Allen, FS; Reggie Brown, OLB; Hayward Clay, TE; Hunter Goodwin, OT; Leeland McElroy, TB (declared for NFL draft); Ray Mickens, CB; Corey Pullig, QB; Chris Sanders, WR; Detron Smith, FB; Sean Terry, P.

Starters returning: **Offense (5):** Calvin Collins, G, 6-3/290, Sr.; Albert Connell, WR, 6-2/180, Sr.; Koby Hackradt, C, 6-5/271, Jr.; Steve McKinney, G, 6-5/274, Jr.; Chris Ruhman, T, 6-6/290, Jr.

Defense (8): Donovan Greer, CB, 5-10/178, Sr.; Edward Jasper, NG, 6-4/291, Sr.; Brandon Mitchell, E, 6-4/275, Sr.; Keith Mitchell, OLB, 6-3/223, Sr.; Tyvall McMullen, SS, 6-2/197, Sr.; Dat Nguyen, ILB, 6-1/213, Soph.; Larry Walker II, ILB, 6-2/231, Sr.; Pat Williams, E, 6-4/275, Sr. **Kickers (1):** Kyle Bryant, K, 5-7/180, Jr.

Other key returnees: Eric Bernard, RB, Soph.; Kevin Colon, QB, Soph.; Trent Driver, LB, Jr.; D'Andre Hardeman, RB, Soph.; Donte Hawkins, WR, Soph.; Marcus Heard, NT, Jr.; Warrick Holdman, OLB, Soph.; Brandon Houston, OT, Soph.; Toya Jones, FS, Soph.; Aaron Oliver, WR, Soph.; Sirk Parker, RB, Soph.; Cameron Spikes, OT, Soph.; Derrick Spiller, TE, Soph.; Andre Williams, CB, Sr.

Top newcomers: Jason Bragg, WR/DB, Fr. (RS); Adren Dudley, TE, Jr. (JC); Eric Jennings, DB, Jr. (JC); Brannndon Stewart, QB, Jr. (transfer/Tennessee); Chris Thierry, LB, Fr.; Chris Valletta, OL, Fr.

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Hardeman (62 att., 313 yds., 2 TD); Passing: Colon (8 att., 3 comp., 1 INT, 0 TD, 47 yds.); Receiving: Connell (41 rec., 653 yds., 7 TD); Tackles: Nguyen (94); Sacks: Mitchell (13).

Site: College Station, Texas. **Stadium:** Kyle Field (70,210).

Last league title won: 1993 (SWC).

SCHEDULE

Aug. 24—at Brigham Young	Oct. 19—Kansas State
Sept. 14—at SW Louisiana	Oct. 26—Texas Tech
Sept. 21—North Texas	Nov. 2—at Oklahoma State
Sept. 28—Colorado	Nov. 9—at Baylor
Oct. 5—Louisiana Tech	Nov. 16—Oklahoma
Oct. 12—at Iowa State	Nov. 29—at Texas

3. BAYLOR

Offensive strengths: Jerod Douglas is a gifted tailback with excellent speed and agility. Kalief Muhammad is a tiny but terrific threat in the backfield or in the slot. Tackle David Davis, one of the best offensive linemen in the country, leads a mammoth line that has six players who weigh at least 290 pounds.

Offensive weaknesses: Baylor got too little production last season from quarterback Jeff Watson, who will have to hold off sophomore Jermaine Alfred and blue-chip recruit Odell James (if he qualifies) to keep the job. The Bears still don't have a consistent go-to receiver; no Baylor player caught even 40 passes last year.

Defensive strengths: Cornerback George McCullough is very active—he broke up 14 passes last season—and safeties Michael Benjamin and Nikia Codie are very athletic. All-buffer nose tackles Roderick Kinney (285 pounds) and Derrick Fletcher (360) beef up the line.

Defensive weaknesses: All of the backups return, but most of the big play-makers responsible for shaping the fifth-best defense in the nation (and a plus-8 turnover margin) are gone. Linebacker play could be more spotty than spectacular with several unproven starters surrounding improving Dean Jackson.

Special teams: Douglas and Muhammad are great at returning kicks, but the Bears have had problems delivering them. Baylor has its pick of Atteberry's with punter Ty and kicker Kyle.

Keys to success: Baylor must bolster one of the weakest passing attacks in the league and rebuild a defense that is missing five of the front seven from a year ago.

Outlook: With four of Baylor's first five games on the road—including Texas Tech and Nebraska—a fast start will be difficult. The passing game, which ranked 79th in the nation and accounted for only eight touchdowns, is not likely to be significantly improved despite the addition of Big Eight career passing leader Mike Gundy as the Bears' quarterbacks coach. Baylor was decimated on defense by graduation, but no coach motivates better than defensive coordinator Andy McCollum. Baylor had an excellent recruiting class, but some marquee recruits had some academic problems and may not be eligible this year.

BEARS DATA

Coach: Chuck Reedy (19-15, 3 years).

1995 record: 7-4, SWC: 5-2/T2nd.

Key losses: Gary Bandy, OLB; Dustin Dennard, WR; Daryl Gardener, DE; Charles Horton, DE; LaCurtis Jones, OLB; Fred Miller, OT; Adrian Robinson, SS; Tyrone Smith, CB; Justin Still, OLB; John Turner, C; Jarvis Van Dyke, K.

Starters returning: **Offense (9):** David Davis, T, 6-4/308, Sr.; Bradley Dornell, TE, 6-4/233, Jr.; Jerod Douglas, TB, 5-9/173, Jr.; Michael Johnson, T (moved from G), 6-3/305, Jr.; Kalief Muhammad, WR, 5-6/175, Sr.; Pearce Pegross, WR, 5-9/170, Jr.; Shawn Washington, FB, 6-1/230, Sr.; Jeff Watson, QB, 6-0/200, Jr.; Anthony Williams, G, 6-3/267, Soph.

Defense (4): Michael Benjamin, SS (moved from FS), 6-0/194, Sr.; Dean Jackson, MLB, 6-1/222, Jr.; Roderick Kinney, NT, 6-3/285, Jr.; George McCullough, CB, 5-10/188, Sr.

Kickers (1): Ty Atteberry, P, 6-0/196, Sr.

Other key returnees: Jermaine Alfred, CB, Soph.; Nikia Codie, FS (moved from SS), Soph. (RS/academics); Glenn Coy, LB, Jr.; Donnie Embra, DE, Sr.; Danny Fletcher, C, Jr.; Derrick Fletcher, NT, Soph.; Curtis Henderson, CB (moved from S), Soph.; Anthony Hodge, TB, Jr.; Jerome Jackson, G,



Underrated Texas Tech tailback Byron Hanspard is coming off a 1,374-yard season.

Jr.; Sheldon Mallory, DE, Jr.; Robert Mason, LB, Sr.; Kenyada Parker, LB, Soph.; Clifton Rubin, FB, Jr.; Anthony Taylor, LB, Jr.

Top newcomers: Kyle Atteberry, K, Fr. (RS); Rodney Artmore, DB, Jr. (JC); Brandon Bonds, S, Fr. (RS); Eddrick Brooks, LB, Fr.; Matt Brown, LB, Fr. (RS); Elijah Burkins, RB, Fr.; Darrell Bush, RB, Fr.; Leonard Hill, LB, Jr. (JC); Odell James, QB, Fr.; Dwight Johnson, DE, Fr. (RS); Brandon Pierpoint, OT, Fr. (RS); Tyson Wilson, DB, Fr.

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Douglas (211 att., 1,114 yds., 8 TD); **Passing:** Watson (214 att., 113 comp., 6 INT, 5 TD, 1,508 yds.); **Receiving:** Muhammad (37 rec., 542 yds., 2 TD); **Tackles:** Jackson (82); **Sacks:** Embra (3.5).

Site: Waco, Texas. **Stadium:** Floyd Casey (50,000).

Last league title won: 1994 (tie/SWC).

SCHEDULE

Sept. 7—at Louisiana Tech	Oct. 26—Iowa State
Sept. 14—at Louisville	Nov. 2—at Texas
Sept. 21—Oregon State	Nov. 9—Texas A&M
Oct. 5—at Texas Tech	Nov. 16—Missouri
Oct. 12—at Nebraska	Nov. 23—at Oklahoma State
Oct. 19—Oklahoma	

4. TEXAS TECH

Offensive strengths: SWC rushing champion Byron Hanspard can find or make holes better than a gopher. He is one of the premier running backs in a league loaded with them. Quarterback Zebbie Lethridge is the Randall Cunningham of college football, explosive but erratic and better at throwing on the run.

Offensive weaknesses: Except for offensive tackle Ben Kaufman, who is adept at protecting Lethridge's blind side, the line is average. Tech hasn't had a bona fide pass-catching tight end in years. There isn't a legitimate fullback, either.

Defensive strengths: The return of defensive end Tony Daniels from a summer knee injury and improvement on the part of tackle Jerome Lang should bolster a solid front that features last year's SWC Newcomer of the Year in Montae Reagor. Linebacker Robert Johnson makes huge plays, and Anthony Armour can run from dawn to dusk.

Defensive weaknesses: After the loss of three seniors, there will be a big dropoff in what had been an outstanding secondary. The team is so desperate for cornerbacks it

moved a wide receiver there (Tony Darden) and is relying on a sophomore, Corey Turner, who broke up just one pass last year.

Special teams: Tony Rogers has missed only once in 10 field-goal tries from 40-49 yards in his career and none of his 37 extra-point tries. Still, he'll have to hold off kickoff specialist Jaret Greaser to keep the job. Tech will audition all comers for the punting job. Dane Johnson is a steady, sure-handed punt returner.

Key to success: Good play at cornerback. The position was decimated by graduation.

Outlook: Texas Tech remains one of the best-kept secrets in college football. Spike Dykes' teams have played in three consecutive bowl games for only the second time in school history (1972-74) and are a decent bet to make it four in a row. There is tremendous skill-position talent and a Heisman Trophy candidate in Hanspard. But Tech must contend with six 1995 bowl teams, five of whom were ranked among the final Top 15 nationally. The 11 opponents on the '96 schedule were a collective 82-44-2 last year.

RED RAIDERS DATA

Coach: Spike Dykes (56-47-1, 9 years).

1995 record: 9-3 (beat Air Force in Copper Bowl), SWC: 5-2/T2nd.

Key losses: Shawn Banks, OLB; Brad Cade, P; Marcus Coleman, S; Jerod Fiebigler, TE; Ed Hendrix, G; Rod Hobbs, FB; Shawn Hurd, CB; Verone McKinley, CB; Zach Thomas, MLB.

Starters returning: **Offense (8):** Byron Hanspard, TB, 6-1/190, Jr.; Casey Jones, G, 6-5/276, Sr.; Ben Kaufman, T, 6-5/274, Sr.; Zebbie Lethridge, QB, 6-0/195, Jr.; Stacy Mitchell, FL, 5-5/150, Jr.; Lynn Scherler, T, 6-4/284, Sr.; Field Scovell, SE, 5-11/184, Sr.; Kevin Ward, C, 6-1/259, Sr.

Defense (6): Anthony Armour, LB (moved from E), 6-1/208, Sr.; Corey Chandler, T, 6-5/252, Jr.; Dane Johnson, FS, 5-11/181, Jr.; Robert Johnson, OLB, 5-11/186, Sr.; Cody McGuire, NT, 6-5/269, Jr.; Montae Reagor, E, 6-1/245, Soph.

Kickers (1): Tony Rogers, K, 5-11/175, Jr.

Other key returnees: Sheldon Bass, WR, Soph. (RS/collarbone); Jody Brown, S, Sr.; Tony Daniels, DE, Jr. (RS/knee); Tony Darden, CB (moved from WR); Ryan Donahue, LB, Sr.; Shane Dunn, G, Sr.; Jaret Greaser, K, Soph.; Donnie Hart, WR, Soph.; Jerome Lang, DT, Sr.; Nick Lee, OT, Soph.; Cody Patton, NT, Soph.; Duane Price, S/CB, Jr.; Jay Pugh, C, Jr.; Corey Turner, CB, Soph.; Allen Wallace, DE, Jr.

Top newcomers: Mickey Anderson, OT, Fr. (RS); Darwin Brown, CB, Fr. (RS); Tim Duffie, LB, Fr. (RS); Jonathan Gray, OT, Fr. (RS); Phillip Hayes, WR, Fr. (RS); Jason Jones, DT, Fr.; Curtis Lowery, G, Fr. (RS); Sammy Morris, FB, Fr. (RS); Taurus Rucker, DE, Fr. (RS); Kyle Shipley, MLB, Fr. (RS).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Hanspard (248 att., 1,374 yds., 11 TD); **Passing:** Lethridge (281 att., 136 comp., 6 INT, 13 TD, 1,885 yds.); **Receiving:** Hanspard (35 rec., 474 yds., 7 TD); **Tackles:** Johnson (65); **Sacks:** Armour, Reagor (3).

Site: Lubbock, Texas. **Stadium:** Jones (50,500).

Last league title won: 1994 (tie/SWC).

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—at Kansas State	Oct. 19—Nebraska
Sept. 7—Okla. St. (at Irving, Texas)	Oct. 26—at Texas A&M
Sept. 21—at Georgia	Nov. 9—Texas
Sept. 28—Utah State	Nov. 16—SW Louisiana
Oct. 5—Baylor	Nov. 23—at Oklahoma
Oct. 12—at Kansas	

5. OKLAHOMA

Offensive strengths: Oklahoma might have the best tight end in the conference in sure-handed Stephen Alexander. It gained a marquee offensive coordinator in innovative Dick Winder, who was lured away from Texas Tech after helping the Red Raiders set 59 school records. Slasher James Allen and powerful Bennie Butler will split backfield duties following the departures of Jerald Moore and Jeff Frazier.

Offensive weaknesses: The offensive line has been suspect the past two years and should remain so with no experience or depth. Strong-armed redshirt freshman Justin Fuente likely will unseat sophomore Eric Moore at quarterback, but Fuentes has not yet thrown a college pass. The wide receivers are unproven.

Defensive strengths: The front seven, paced by Butkus Award candidates Tyrell Peters and Broderick Simpson and excellent pass-rusher Travian Smith, is solid and perhaps even better than last year's run-stuffing unit that helped the Sooners finish ninth in the nation in rush defense.

Defensive weaknesses: Completely untested except for free safety Anthony Fogle, the secondary again will be vulnerable. Overall, the defense isn't that big, either. End Cedric Jones will be missed.

Special teams: Groza Award semifinalist Jeremy Alexander missed only three of 17 field-goal attempts last season, but he has yet to show his range. Punter Tim Daughtry averaged almost 41 yards per punt on the ones he got off, but Oklahoma had four punts blocked last year.

Key to success: The Sooners, who haven't had a reliable quarterback since Cale Gundy in 1993, won't reach .500 without one. This team has fragile confidence and needs a fast start.

Outlook: First-year coach John Blake has his work cut out for him. He inherits a team that scored only 40 points in its last five games and lost its best offensive (J. Moore) and defensive (Jones) players. The program's third coach in three seasons could become only the second Oklahoma first-year coach to have a losing record. John A. Harts was 0-1 in the Sooners' initial season in 1895.

SOONERS DATA

Coach: John Blake (first year).

1995 record: 5-5-1. Big Eight: 2-5/T5th.

Key losses: Larry Bush, CB; Joe Carollo, G; J.R. Conrad, OT; Brent DeQuasie, OLB; Jeff Frazier, RB (quit team); Darius Johnson, CB; Cedric Jones, DE; Chuck Langston, C; P.J. Mills, WR; Jerald Moore, FB (declared for NFL draft); Milton Overton, G; JaJuan Penny, WR; Harry Stamps, OT; Maylon Wesley, FS.

Starters returning: **Offense (3):** Stephen Alexander, TE, 6-4/225, Jr.; James Allen, RB, 5-10/207, Sr.; Eric Moore, QB, 6-0/175, Soph. **Defense (6):** Martin Chase, T, 6-2/278, Jr.; Anthony Fogle, FS, 5-11/195, Sr.; Stirling Luckey, E, 6-3/247, Sr.; Tyrell Peters, MLB, 6-0/210, Sr.; Broderick Simpson, OLB, 6-1/212, Sr.; Baron Tanner, T, 6-3/282, Sr. **Kickers (2):** Jeremy Alexander, K, 5-10/180, Jr.; Tim Daughtry, P, 6-1/225, Jr.

Other key returnees: Chris Campbell, OT, Sr.; Kelly Gregg, DT, Soph.; Rod Henderson, CB, Sr.; Rod Manuel, DE, Sr.; Bruce McClure, C, Jr.; Michael Daniel, TE, Sr.; Jay Smith, OL, Soph.; Travian Smith, LB, Jr.; Michael Thompson, WR, Sr. (RS/broken leg); Gerald Williams, WR, Soph.

Top newcomers: Bennie Butler, RB, Fr. (RS/academics); Brandon Daniels, WR/DB, Fr.; Anthony Davis, DB, Fr. (RS); Aaron Findley, DE, Fr. (RS); Justin Fuente, QB, Fr. (RS); Gana Joseph, DB, Soph.; Chris Justice, LB, Fr. (RS); Scott Kempenich, OT, Fr. (RS); Mo Little, WR, Jr. (JC); Demond Parker, RB, Fr. (RS); Seth Smith, WR, Soph. (transfer/Michigan).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Allen (87 att., 338 yds., 2 TD); **Passing:** Moore (200 att., 90 comp., 9 INT, 7 TD, 1,375 yds.); **Receiving:** Alexander (43 rec., 580 yds., 2 TD); **Tackles:** Simpson (108); **Sacks:** Manuel (5). **Site:** Norman, Okla. **Stadium:** Memorial (75,004). **Last league title won:** 1987.



Senior Tyrell Peters is part of what looks to be an excellent linebacking unit for Oklahoma.

SCHEDULE

Sept. 7—Texas Christian	Oct. 26—at Kansas State
Sept. 21—at San Diego St.	Nov. 2—Nebraska
Sept. 28—Tulsa	Nov. 9—at Oklahoma State
Oct. 5—Kansas	Nov. 16—at Texas A&M
Oct. 12—Texas (at Dallas)	Nov. 23—Texas Tech
Oct. 19—at Baylor	

6. OKLAHOMA STATE

Offensive strengths: Only Troy Davis ran for more yards in the Big Eight than David Thompson. Thompson and the speedy Andre Richardson provide a tremendous 1-2 punch in the backfield. Alonzo Mayes provides a huge target at tight end.

Offensive weaknesses: Unless JC transfer Joe Phears unseats him, three-year starter Tone' Jones will return at quarterback. He's a hot-shot runner but a scatter-shot passer. The workmanlike line strikes no fear in the hearts of defenses.

Defensive strengths: Linebacker Louis Adams is the best athlete, but he'll have to stabilize a young crew around him. Tackle Jamal Williams is a budding star.

Defensive weaknesses: Bob Simmons' attempt to downsize the defense and get quicker players on the field paid off in pursuit but hurt the Cowboys in the fourth quarter. With end Jevon Langford's decision to skip his final season, the line will have big problems. Cornerback is suspect.

Special teams: The Cowboys have lost their kicker, punter and snapper and will be relying on a JC punter and a redshirt freshman kicker. At least that kicker, Tim Sydnes, has a strong leg. McQuarters averaged nearly 24 yards per kickoff return.

Keys to success: If Phears doesn't win the QB job, Jones must gain some consistency and cut down his interception-to-touchdown ratio. The sophomore wide receivers need to improve drastically.

Outlook: Simmons started 12 freshmen at times in 1995 and has the Cowboys headed in the right direction. They won two of

their last three, including their first shutout of Oklahoma since 1945. Simmons has fixed the attitude, but the ability lags behind. Still, with seven home games and Southwest Missouri State, Tulsa and Utah State on the schedule, the Cowboys have a decent chance for their first winning season since 1988.

COWBOYS DATA

Coach: Bob Simmons (4-8, 1 year).

1995 record: 4-8. Big Eight: 2-5/T5th.

Key losses: Alamu Bailey, ILB; Lorenzo Green, DT; Geoff Grenier, FB; Bryan Hope, C; Greg Ivy, P; Johnny Jones, CB; Jevon Langford, DE (declared for NFL draft); Lawson Vaughn, K; Scott Waterbury, G; Norman Williams, DT.

Starters returning: **Offense (8):** Travis Hartfield, WR, 6-2/195, Soph.; Josh Henson, C (moved from G), 6-2/250, Sr.; Tone' Jones, QB, 5-11/190, Sr.; Derek Leinen, T, 6-4/292, Sr.; Kent Luck, WR, 5-8/175, Sr.; Alonzo Mayes, TE, 6-6/252, Jr.; Calvin Menephee, T, 6-2/300, Jr.; David Thompson, TB, 5-8/205, Sr. **Defense (6):** Louis Adams, OLB, 6-1/225, Sr.; Trent Fisher, FS, 5-10/190, Sr.; Courtney Garner, SS, 6-0/185, Sr.; Josh Green, ILB, 6-0/210, Soph.; Jay Grosfield, E, 6-4/255, Sr.; R.W. McQuarters, CB, 5-11/185, Soph. **Kickers:** None.

Other key returnees: Brian Aikens, FB, Soph.; Jermaine Birdow, DE, Soph.; Ryan Cambern, LB, Sr. (RS/knee); Jitu Criddle, CB, Sr.; Willie Grissom, WR, Soph.; Tarrell Knaules, LB, Soph.; Taber LeBlanc, LB, Soph.; Sean Love, WR, Soph.; Andre Richardson, TB, Jr.; Billy Stone, LB, Soph.; Jamal Williams, NT, Soph.; Kevin Williams, S, Sr.

Top newcomers: Brandon Ashley, DT, Soph. (transfer/Tennessee); Raymond Cato, LB, Fr.; Chris Chaloutka, QB, Fr. (RS); Tank Coleman, WR/KR, Soph. (Prop 48); Adam Davis, G, Fr. (RS); Jason Davis, P, Jr. (JC); Kerry Linneer, DT, Fr.; J.B. Flowers, CB, Fr. (RS); Joe Phears, QB, Jr. (JC); Eric Stevenson, RB, Fr.; Tim Sydnes, K, Fr. (RS); Cameron White, WR, Fr. (RS/knee).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Thompson (256 att., 1,509 yds., 8 TD); **Passing:** Jones (218 att., 104 comp., 11 INT, 7 TD, 1,185 yards); **Receiving:** Mayes (32 rec., 421 yds., 4 TD); **Tackles:** Fisher (91); **Sacks:** Grosfield (7). **Site:** Stillwater, Okla. **Stadium:** Lewis Field (50,614). **Last league title won:** 1976.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—Southwest Missouri State	Oct. 19—Iowa State
Sept. 7—Texas Tech (at Dallas)	Oct. 26—at Missouri
Sept. 14—Tulsa	Nov. 2—Texas A&M
Sept. 21—Utah State	Nov. 9—Oklahoma
Oct. 5—at Texas	Nov. 23—Baylor
Oct. 12—at Colorado	

Kirk Bohls covers the Big 12 for the Austin (Texas) American-Statesman.

Ascending: Texas Tech and Oklahoma State. Nebraska will discover just how potent the Red Raiders' Zebbie Lethridge and Byron Hanspard are on October 19 in Lubbock. Oklahoma State coach Bob Simmons has recruited well, and the Cowboys will be trying to finish above .500 for the first time since 1988.

Descending: Oklahoma. New, untested coach John Blake must pick up the pieces from one of college football's shortest, most divisive reigns. Just what was Oklahoma thinking when Howard



Blake

Schnellenberger was hired? And what can Blake be thinking now?

Nightmare schedule: Colorado. Not only is the schedule mean, it's spread out over 14 weeks—perhaps 15 if the Buffs reach the Big 12 title game. Non-conference games are against Washington State (in Boulder), Colorado State (Fort Collins) and Michigan (Boulder). In league play, Colorado goes to Texas A&M, Kansas and Nebraska. The only positive is that for only the second time in school history, the Buffs have three open dates, including the weeks preceding the trips to College Station and Lincoln.

Dream schedule: Kansas State. The Wildcats might as well retire this trophy. Their non-conference schedule consists of home games against Indiana State and Cincinnati and a trip to Rice. But the Big 12 road is a bit bumpier: Texas A&M, Kansas and Colorado.

Best matchup of the year: Colorado at Nebraska, November 29. The Big 12's birth meant the death of the annual Oklahoma-Nebraska game on Thanksgiving weekend, but a Buffs-Huskers pairing is a more-than-suitable replacement. This game decided five of the final six Big Eight championships.

Worst matchup of the year: Take your pick: Indiana State at Kansas State on September 7 or Texas A&M at Southwestern Louisiana on September 14. Wake us when they're over.

Bowl bound: It might be easier to list who *isn't* going bowling. The Big 12 will be a big hit in bowl circles. Nebraska, Colorado, Kansas and Kansas State figure to represent the North Division, with the South Division sending Texas, Texas A&M, Baylor and Texas Tech.

Biggest shoes to fill: Nebraska quarterback Tommie Frazier's. The Cornhuskers have all the components in place for yet another national title run. Except one. Stanford transfer Scott Frost will get the call.

Most underrated player: Missouri safety DeMontie Cross. Historically, the Tigers' defense has been easy to overlook. Cross won't be; he can play safety, outside linebacker or a rover position.

Most overrated player: Texas safety Chris Carter. He has yet to have back-to-

HONOR ROLL

Best offensive backfield:	Texas.
Best wide receivers:	Colorado.
Best offensive line:	Nebraska.
Best defensive line:	Texas A&M.
Best linebackers:	Colorado.
Best secondary:	Kansas State.
Best special teams:	Texas A&M.
Hardest hitter:	Bryant Westbrook, CB, Texas.
Best backup quarterback:	John Hessler, Colorado.
Best pro prospect:	Brandon Mitchell, DE, Texas A&M.
Best game-day atmosphere:	Colorado.

RANKING THE RECRUITING

Top recruit in parentheses

1. Nebraska (RB DeAngelo Evans): The Cornhuskers followed form, landing a top-rated running back, a handful of monstrous linemen, a superb linebacker in George Gudry and highly touted corners Mike and Ralph Brown (no relation).
2. Colorado (DL Jesse Warren).
3. Baylor (QB Odell James).
4. Texas (DL Cedric Woodard).
5. Oklahoma (DB/WR Brandon Daniels).
6. Texas A&M (OL Chris Valletta).
7. Oklahoma State (RB Eric Stevenson).
8. Texas Tech (DT Jason Jones).
9. Kansas State (QB Jonathan Beasley).
10. Kansas (RB Arland Bruce).
11. Missouri (RB Ricardo Rhodes).
12. Iowa State (RB Darren Davis).

back consistent seasons. After a subpar sophomore year in 1994, he bounced back statistically (129 tackles, nine passes broken up) in '95. He can be very good—or very average.

Best coach: Nebraska's Tom Osborne. Whatever you think about his handling of the Lawrence Phillips saga and other Big Red crimes, give Osborne this: He had the Huskers honed and ready to play every game in their tumultuous 1995 season.

Best staff: Nebraska. Turnover among Osborne's assistants is as rare as non-sell-outs in Lincoln. A huge reason the Cornhuskers have won back-to-back national championships is staff stability. Ask Florida's Steve Spurrier about Charlie McBride, who is beginning his 20th season (15th as defensive coordinator) on Osborne's staff.

Coach on the hot seat: Missouri's Larry Smith. He isn't in danger of losing his job, but Tigers fans are clamoring for some definite signs of improvement. His first two Mizzou teams were 3-8-1 and 3-8, with just three conference wins.

Best bets: No one in Oklahoma will miss Howard Schnellenberger. ... Everyone in Nebraska will miss Tommie Frazier. ... Kansas' Glen Mason won't seek or be offered a job of any sort in Georgia. ... Kansas State coach Bill Snyder will be mentioned for another job at season's end. ... If there's an opening on Colorado's staff, Rick Neuheisel will look first to UCLA to fill it. His latest hire—defensive ends coach Tim Hundley—came from Westwood, giving the Buffs their

fifth staffer with UCLA ties. ... Texas' John Mackovic won't pass up another short field goal, as he did in a regrettable 24-24 tie with Oklahoma last season. ... Iowa State tailback Troy Davis won't become the first Division I-A player to rush for 2,000 yards in consecutive seasons. ... Texas A&M will lose two big games, namely to Colorado on September 28 in College Station and to Texas on November 29 in Austin. ... Texas Tech quarterback Zebbie Lethridge will make a superbly athletic play, and coach Spike Dykes will describe it as only Dykes can. ... Even if Nebraska reaches St. Louis for the Big 12 championship game, coach Tom Osborne will grouse about the divisional playoff format.

Odds and ends: The Nebraska offense could feature 10 in-state starters. ... Katie Kelley, a 1992 Colorado graduate from Boston, is now Mrs. Koy Detmer. The Buffs' senior quarterback and his girlfriend exchanged vows on January 20 in Lyons, Colo. They are the parents of Koy Jr., born March 1. ... Nebraska reserve punter Andy Bilanzich, a redshirt freshman from Salt Lake City, has had his eye on the Cornhuskers for as long as he can remember. Before enrolling in Lincoln, Bilanzich—who lost his left eye in a childhood accident—had a false eye



Lethridge

made with an "N" on it.

... Texas Tech quarterback Zebbie Lethridge set a record in the now-defunct SWC with 211 consecutive pass attempts without an interception. ... Of the 109 players on Texas' spring roster, 93 were in-state recruits. Nine came from California, two from Louisiana and one each from five other states. ... Who's the fastest QB in the Big 12? Probably Colorado's Jeremy Weisinger, a redshirt freshman who reportedly was timed at 4.27 seconds in the 40-yard dash last spring. ... Nebraska's home sellout streak of 209 games is the longest of any NCAA school. ... The Big 12's inaugural game was to have featured Kansas State at Texas A&M on August 31. When K-State coach Bill Snyder balked, the Big 12 replaced A&M with Texas Tech—and made the Red Raiders the visiting team. The Aggies wound up with an August 24 opener, at Brigham Young in the Kickoff Classic. ... Nebraska sophomore linebacker Jay Foreman is the son of former Minnesota Vikings great Chuck Foreman. ... New England Patriots quarterback Drew Bledsoe's little brother, Adam, is a freshman quarterback at Colorado. ... K-State quarterback Cody Lee Smith lost nearly 30 pounds and didn't play last season because of a stomach illness that prevented him from keeping his food down. He apparently has recovered.

—B.G. BROOKS



Center Jeff Mitchell, an All-American candidate, is one of three returning line starters at Florida.

EASTERN DIVISION

1. FLORIDA

Offensive strengths: This could take awhile. Quarterback Danny Wuerffel is one of the nation's most productive offensive players and runs Steve Spurrier's Fun-and-Gun system to near-perfection. If he throws his arm out, Eric Kresser will keep the engine running. Ike Hilliard and Reidel Anthony are a superb receiving tandem. Even without departed Chris Doering, there's plenty of receiver depth to run a five-wide formation. The running game doesn't get as much publicity as the aerial circus, but Elijah Williams, Fred Taylor and Terry Jackson are proven commodities.

Offensive weaknesses: They say the third-team fullback is a step slow. Seriously, Nebraska did abuse the Gators' line in last year's Fiesta Bowl and Florida did lose two good linemen in tackle Jason Odom and guard Reggie Green.

Defensive strengths: The secondary returns intact and it's a good one, perhaps the result of going against Florida's offense every day in practice. Strong safety Lawrence Wright has a knack for knocking unsuspecting receivers into next week. Like Wright, cornerback Anthone Lott earned All-SEC honors last year. Fred Weary also had a big year at corner in 1995.

Defensive weaknesses: For the second consecutive year, the Gators must replace three-fourths of the front four. Returnees Keith Council and Ed Chester shared one of the tackle jobs in '95. Much is expected of redshirt freshman tackles Ernie Badeaux and Reggie McGrew. New coordinator Bob Stoops, who orchestrated tough units at Kansas State, has to replace All-SEC linebackers Ben Hanks and Dexter Daniels.

Special teams: This is a point of excellence. Bart Edmiston returns to kick a ton of extra points—with Florida's offense, he doesn't try many field goals. He made only 6-of-12 in '95 and only one from beyond 40 yards. The return game always is dan-

SEC Conference Rank: 2 By DAVE MOORMAN and MIKE STRANGE

PREDICTIONS

EAST DIVISION

1. FLORIDA
2. TENNESSEE
3. GEORGIA
4. SOUTH CAROLINA
5. KENTUCKY
6. VANDERBILT

WEST DIVISION

1. AUBURN
2. LSU
3. ALABAMA
4. ARKANSAS
5. MISSISSIPPI STATE
6. MISSISSIPPI

gerous with Anthony, who returned two kickoffs for touchdowns in '95. Florida also blocked nine kicks last year. Robby Stevenson is back after averaging 38.3 yards per punt.

Key to success: Stoops needs to bring stability to Florida's defense. He promises a more aggressive unit. And some untested talent must come through on the offensive line.

Outlook: The two biggest games, Tennessee and Florida State, are on the road, but don't count out Florida and its high-powered offense. If the defense is up to snuff, Spurrier has a chance to get the Gators back to the national championship game.

GATORS DATA

Coach: Steve Spurrier (61-13-1, 6 years; 81-26-2 overall, 9 years).

1995 record: 12-1 (lost to Nebraska in Fiesta Bowl). SEC East: 8-0/1st.

Key losses: David Barnard, DT; Mark Campbell, DE; Johnie Church, DE; Dexter Daniels, ILB; Chris Doering, WR; Reggie Green, G; Ben Hanks, OLB; Jason Odom, OT.

Starters returning: **Offense (8):** Tremayne Allen, TE, 6-2/230, Sr.; Mo Collins, T, 6-5/308, Soph.; Ike Hilliard, WR, 5-11/182, Jr.; Jeff Mitchell, C, 6-4/285, Sr.; Dwayne Mobley, FB, 5-10/227, Sr.; Elijah Williams, TB, 5-10/180, Jr.; Danny Wuerffel, QB, 6-2/209, Sr.; Donnie Young, G, 6-4/299, Sr.

Defense (6): James Bates, LB, 6-1/228, Sr.; Teako Brown, FS, 5-11/187, Soph.; Ed Chester, T, 6-4/276, Soph.; Anthone Lott, CB, 5-9/192, Sr.; Fred Weary, CB, 5-10/177, Jr.; Lawrence Wright, SS, 6-1/209, Sr. **Kickers (2):** Bart Edmiston, K, 5-11/175, Sr.; Robby Stevenson, P, 6-1/188, Soph.

Other key returnees: Reidel Anthony, WR, Jr.; Tim Beauchamp, DE, Soph.; Pat Browning, OT, Soph.; Willie Cohens, DE, Soph.; Keith Council, DT, Jr.; Cameron Davis, DE, Sr.; Jerome Evans, FB, Sr.; Jacques Green, WR, Soph.; Mike Harris, FS, Jr.; Demetric Jackson, SS, Sr.; Terry Jackson, TB, Soph.; Eric Kresser, QB, Sr.; Travis McGriff, WR, Soph.; Mike Moten, DT, Jr.; Shawn Nunn, TE, Sr.; Mike Peterson, LB, Soph.; Willie Rodgers, DE, Jr.; Johnny Rutledge, LB, Soph.; Shea Showers, CB, Sr.; Deac Story, G, Soph.; Fred Taylor, TB, Jr.; Kevin Walton, LB, Jr.

Top newcomers: Ernie Badeaux, DT, Fr. (RS); Cooper Carlisle, OT, Fr. (RS); Ryan Kalich, G, Fr. (RS); Jevon Kearse,

LB, Fr. (RS); Keith Kelsey, LB, Fr. (RS); Erron Kinney, TE, Fr. (RS); Sean Ladd, OL, Soph. (JC); Reggie McGrew, DT, Fr. (RS); Zach Piller, OT, Soph. (transfer/Georgia Tech); Dock Pollard, CB, Fr. (RS); Jamie Richardson, WR, Fr. (RS).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Williams (114 att., 858 yds., 7 TD); **Passing:** Wuerffel (325 att., 210 comp., 10 INT, 35 TD, 3,266 yds.); **Receiving:** Hilliard (57 rec., 1,008 yds., 15 TD); **Tackles:** Wright (109); **Sacks:** Three tied with 2. **Site:** Gainesville, Fla. **Stadium:** Florida Field (83,000). **Last league title won:** 1995.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—SW Louisiana	Oct. 19—Auburn
Sept. 7—Ga. Southern	Nov. 2—Georgia (at Jacksonville)
Sept. 21—at Tennessee	Nov. 9—at Vanderbilt
Sept. 28—Kentucky	Nov. 16—South Carolina
Oct. 5—at Arkansas	Nov. 30—at Florida State
Oct. 12—Louisiana State	



Leonard Little is a pass-rushing terror for Tennessee; he had 11 sacks last season.

2. TENNESSEE

Offensive strengths: Think there aren't a few NFL teams that would like to have Peyton Manning under center this fall? He's talented, he's smart, he's accurate, he's got the bloodlines and he's a good guy. With tailback Jay Graham, who ran for a school-record 1,438 yards in '95, joined by heralded newcomer Brian Darden, Tennessee has a running game to complement Manning's passes. Joey Kent is the go-to receiver, and if Marcus Nash stops dropping a few passes, he'll be in Kent's class.

Offensive weaknesses: The Vols lost three linemen to the NFL draft and four overall. It would be a shame if Manning and Graham didn't get the time and room, respectively, to operate. But being an old line coach, Phillip Fulmer pays special attention to this department, and the cupboard is never bare. Tackle Jarvis Readon spent the last half of '95 getting experience at protecting Manning's backside.

Defensive strengths: End Leonard Little got 11 sacks his first year on the job and Reggie White's school single-season record of 15 is within reach in '96. It got to where hardly anybody could block Little on pass rushes, and he improved against the run, too. The Vols are good up the

middle, with a decent rotation at tackle and playmaker Tyrone Hines at middle linebacker. The secondary will be Tennessee's best in years, with standout cornerbacks Raymond Austin and Terry Fair teaming with All-SEC candidate Jason Parker, back at safety after a year's suspension.

Defensive weaknesses: The outside linebacker spots are open, but that's not necessarily bad. Last year's group was criticized for not making enough plays, so guys like Al Wilson and Craig King could become heroes at a program where defense has been the missing link in the hunger for a national championship.

Special teams: Two thumbs up for kicker Jeff Hall, who made 16-of-25 attempts en route to All-SEC honors as a freshman. But the jury is out on punter Larry Binion, who was plagued by inconsistency while averaging 35.9 yards. Incoming freshman David Leaverton will get a good look. Fair is the top candidate to return kicks.

Key to success: Tighten up the defensive holes. There were several games last year where the offense simply had to outscore the opposition. With Manning & Co., that's usually doable. But even Manning can't overcome 48 consecutive points, which Tennessee allowed vs. Florida last season after building a 30-14 lead.

Outlook: Can the Vols improve on 11-1? They could, because Florida must go to Knoxville.

VOLUNTEERS DATA

Coach: Phillip Fulmer (32-7-1, 4 years).

1995 record: 11-1 (beat Ohio State in Citrus Bowl). SEC East: 7-1/2nd.

Key losses: Shane Burton, DT; Scott Galyon, OLB; DeRon Jenkins, CB; Jason Layman, OT; Bubba Miller, C; Trey Peterson, G; Jesse Sanders, OLB; Jeff Smith, G; Steve White, DE.

Starters returning: Offense (7): Chester Ford, FB, 6-0/228, Sr.; Jay Graham, TB, 6-0/206, Sr.; Joey Kent, WR, 6-1/184, Sr.; Peyton Manning, QB, 6-5/215, Jr.; Marcus Nash, WR, 6-3/190, Jr.; Scott Pfeiffer, TE, 6-5/245, Sr.; Robert Poole, T, 6-3/291, Jr. Defense (7): Raymond Austin, CB (moved from SS), 5-11/181, Sr.; Billy Beron, T, 6-3/265, Jr.; Terry Fair, CB/KR, 5-11/175, Jr.; Ron Green, T, 6-1/265, Soph.; Tyrone Hines, MLB, 6-0/228, Sr.; Leonard Little, E, 6-3/230, Jr.; Tori Noel, SS (moved from FS), 6-0/182, Jr. Kickers (2): Larry Binion, P, 6-3/190, Sr.; Jeff Hall, K, 6-0/182, Soph.

Other key returnees: Jonathan Brown, DE, Jr.; Jeff Coleman, DE, Soph.; Jermaine Copeland, QB/WR, Soph.; Bill Duff, DT, Jr.; Cory Gaines, FS, Jr.; Mercedes Hamilton, G (moved from DT), Soph.; Nick Jester, LB, Sr. (RS/injury); Craig King, LB, Sr.; Mark Levine, RB, Soph.; Andy McCullough, WR, Jr.; Dustin Moore, TE, Soph.; Jason Parker, FS, Sr. (RS/suspension); Peerless Price, WR, Soph.; Diron Robinson, C, Soph.; Benjie Shuler, WR, Jr.; Trey Teague, OT, Jr.; Jarvis Read, OT, Jr.; Al Wilson, LB, Soph.

Top newcomers: Chad Clifton, G, Fr. (RS); Brian Darden, TB, Fr.; Shaun Ellis, DE, Fr.; Dwayne Goodrich, DB, Fr.; Shawn Johnson, LB, Fr. (RS); David Leaverton, P, Fr.; Tee Martin, QB, Fr.; Billy Ratliff, DE, Fr. (RS); Spencer Riley, DT, Fr. (RS); Corey Terry, DL, Soph. (JC); Fred White, SS, Fr. (RS).

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Graham (272 att., 1,438 yds., 12 TD); Passing: Manning (380 att., 244 comp., 4 INT, 22 TD, 2,954 yds.); Receiving: Kent (69 rec., 1,055 yds., 9 TD); Tackles: Hines (78); Sacks: Little (11).

Site: Knoxville, Tenn. **Stadium:** Neyland (102,485).

Last league title won: 1990.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—UNLV	Nov. 2—at South Carolina
Sept. 7—UCLA	Nov. 9—at Memphis
Sept. 21—Florida	Nov. 16—Arkansas
Oct. 3—vs. Miss. (at Memphis)	Nov. 23—Kentucky
Oct. 12—at Georgia	Nov. 30—at Vanderbilt
Oct. 26—Alabama	

3. GEORGIA

Offensive strengths: Georgia's glory days are tied to a herd of great running backs,



A healthy Mike Bobo would go a long way toward Georgia having a consistent offense.

not Air Zeier, and the Bulldogs are loaded once again. Six running backs who started at least one game last season return, led by Robert Edwards, the converted defensive back who was brilliant in his two-game, injury-shortened season. Torin Kirtsey, Edwards' chief replacement, has valuable experience, but the back to watch is incoming freshman Patrick Pass, one of the more highly touted recruits in the nation. A healthy Mike Bobo at quarterback throwing to Juan Daniels and Hines Ward should give Georgia a balanced offense.

Offensive weaknesses: Three starters on the line will be tough to replace, especially since all three were fifth-year seniors. Tackle Adam Meadows and guard Resty Beadles are the nucleus around which new coach Jim Donnan, who arrives from Marshall, must rebuild.

Defensive strengths: The secondary has a chance to be good, as do the linebackers. Corey Johnson brings leadership to the secondary at free safety. Strong safety Armin Love and cornerbacks Alandus Sims and Ronald Bailey have started, and depth is excellent. Despite losing leading tackler Whit Marshall, the linebacking group returns Greg Bright and Brandon Tolbert. Tolbert did a fine job starting last year when Randall Godfrey was injured, and Bright is a two-year starter.

Defensive weaknesses: Help! The top four ends are gone. The Bulldogs recorded only 25 sacks last year, so getting more production at end would be a good idea. Chris Terry is the leading returnee, but he had just seven tackles last season. This sounds like a golden opportunity for a JC transfer like Cletidus Hunt or a blue-chip freshman like Marcus Stroud.

Special teams: Punter Dax Langley, who averaged 39.5 yards last season, is solid. He'll also try to win the kicking job left by Kanon Parkman. Chris McCranie averaged 10.5 yards per punt return in '95.

Keys to success: First, Georgia has to

avoid the injuries that sabotaged whatever hope Ray Goff had of saving his job last year. Second, the Bulldogs have to get tougher on defense, especially up front. That's where tackle Jason Ferguson and nose guard Jermaine Smith must deliver.

Outlook: Georgia has three winnable SEC road games: South Carolina, Mississippi State and Kentucky. A sweep would make Dawgs fans happy with Donnan. Third place in the East is there for the taking.

BULLDOGS DATA

Coach: Jim Donnan (first season; 64-21 overall, 6 years).

1995 record: 6-6 (lost to Virginia in Peach Bowl). SEC East: 3-5/3rd.

Key losses: Phillip Benton, DE; Phillip Daniels, DE; Randall Godfrey, LB; Brice Hunter, WR; Whit Marshall, MLB; Buster Owens, CB; Kanon Parkman, K; Paul Taylor, G; Troy Stark, OT; David Weeks, C.

Starters returning: Offense (7): Resty Beadles, G, 6-3/294, Sr.; Larry Brown, TE, 6-5/250, Soph.; Selma Calloway, FB, 5-11/200, Jr.; Juan Daniels, WR, 6-2/207, Sr.; Torin Kirtsey, TB, 6-0/175, Soph.; Adam Meadows, T, 6-7/280, Sr.; Hines Ward, WR (moved from QB), 6-1/194, Jr. Defense (7): Greg Bright, OLB, 6-2/225, Jr.; Jason Ferguson, T, 6-5/305, Sr.; Corey Johnson, FS, 5-11/190, Sr.; Armin Love, SS, 6-1/192, Soph.; Alandus Sims, CB, 6-1/194, Sr.; Jermaine Smith, NG, 6-3/275, Sr.; Brandon Tolbert, OLB, 6-2/221, Jr. Kickers (1): Dax Langley, P, 6-2/178, Jr.

Other key returnees: Robert Anaud, TB, Soph.; Ronald Bailey, CB, Jr.; Mike Bobo, QB, Jr.; Derrick Byrd, DE, Jr.; Odell Collins, FB/TB, Sr.; Matt Dickson, WR, Sr.; Robert Edwards, TB, Jr. (RS/foot); Antonio Fleming, G, Jr.; D.J. Johnson, MLB, Jr.; Chris McCranie, WR/KR, Sr.; Marisa Simpson, FB, Sr.; Kirby Smart, CB, Soph.; Paul Snellings, DT, Soph.; Matt Stinchcomb, G, Soph.; Travis Stroud, NG, Jr.; Chris Terry, DE, Soph.; Marcus Williams, OLB, Sr.

Top newcomers: Earl Chambers, QB, Fr. (RS); Cletidus Hunt, DE, Jr. (JC); Miles Luckie, DT, Fr. (RS); Larry Mann, FS, Fr. (RS); Patrick Pass, TB, Fr.; Rich Robich, MLB, Jr. (JC); Marcus Stroud, DE, Fr.

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Kirtsey (134 att., 603 yds., 5 TD); Passing: Ward (112 att., 69 comp., 3 INT, 2 TD, 872 yds.); Receiving: Daniels (46 rec., 726 yds., 5 TD); Tackles: Bright (93); Sacks: Smart (3).

Site: Athens, Ga. **Stadium:** Sanford (86,117).

Last league title won: 1982.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—Southern Miss	Oct. 26—at Kentucky
Sept. 14—at S. Carolina	Nov. 2—Florida (at Jacksonville)
Sept. 21—Texas Tech	Nov. 16—at Auburn
Oct. 5—at Mississippi St.	Nov. 23—Mississippi
Oct. 12—Tennessee	Nov. 30—Georgia Tech
Oct. 19—Vanderbilt	

4. SOUTH CAROLINA

Offensive strengths: The Gamecocks have some playmakers at the skill positions. Tailback Duce Staley averaged 5.8 yards per carry and scored eight rushing touchdowns. He also caught 31 passes, proving his value in Brad Scott's Florida State scheme. Receiver Zola Davis snagged 58 passes in his rookie season and will be joined by touted freshman Jermale Kelly, the second-leading receiver in South Carolina prep history. Also, three line starters are back, led by tackle Jamar Nesbit.

Offensive weaknesses: Inexperience, especially at quarterback. Steve Taneyhill started the last 40 games, but he and his charisma are gone. Their apparent Anthony Wright has some skills and should be more mobile. On the downside, his resume includes only 27 career pass attempts. Fullback Stanley Pritchett also appears to have left nearly unfillable shoes. He rushed for 333 yards and caught a team-high 62 passes.

Defensive strengths: Strength is a relative term since South Carolina was dreadful in virtually every category last year. On the bright side, three starters return in the sec-

PRESEASON All-SEC TEAM

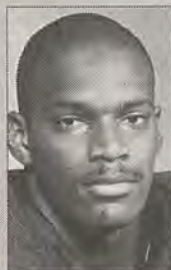
PLAYERS OF THE YEAR

OFFENSE



PEYTON MANNING
QB, Tennessee

DEFENSE



MARCELLUS
MOSTELLA
OLB, Auburn

NEWCOMERS OF THE YEAR

OFFENSE: Tim Couch, QB, Kentucky
DEFENSE: Michael Myers, DE, Alabama

FIRST TEAM

OFFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
WR	JOEY KENT, Tennessee	6-1/184	Sr.
WR	IKE HILLIARD, Florida	5-11/182	Jr.
TE	KRIS MANGUM, Mississippi	6-4/240	Sr.
T	PETE DIMARIO, Alabama	6-4/276	Sr.
T	ADAM MEADOWS, Georgia	6-7/280	Sr.
G	LEONARD THOMAS, Auburn	6-2/294	Sr.
G	DONNIE YOUNG, Florida	6-4/299	Sr.
C	JEFF MITCHELL, Florida	6-4/285	Sr.
QB	PEYTON MANNING, Tennessee	6-5/215	Jr.
RB	JAY GRAHAM, Tennessee	6-0/206	Sr.
RB	KEVIN FAULK, LSU	5-10/192	Soph.

DEFENSE

E	LEONARD LITTLE, Tennessee	6-3/230	Jr.
T	CHUCK WILEY, LSU	6-4/274	Jr.
E	DARRELL BLACKBURN, Alabama	6-4/224	Sr.
LB	MARCELLUS MOSTELLA, Auburn	6-3/235	Sr.
LB	MARK SMITH, Arkansas	6-3/229	Sr.
LB	DWAYNE CURRY, Mississippi State	6-3/248	Sr.
LB	DWAYNE RUDD, Alabama	6-2/232	Jr.
CB	DESHEA TOWNSEND, Alabama	5-10/170	Jr.
CB	ANTHONY LOTT, Florida	5-9/192	Sr.
S	LAWRENCE WRIGHT, Florida	6-1/209	Sr.
S	KEVIN JACKSON, Alabama	6-1/200	Sr.

SPECIALISTS

K	JEFF HALL, Tennessee	6-0/182	Soph.
P	BILL MARINANGEL, Vanderbilt	6-2/215	Sr.
KR	REIDEL ANTHONY, Florida	5-11/176	Jr.

SECOND TEAM

OFFENSE

WR	REIDEL ANTHONY, Florida	5-11/176	Jr.
WR	WILLIE GOSHA, Auburn	6-1/168	Sr.
TE	DAVID LaFLEUR, LSU	6-7/278	Sr.
T	JAMAR NESBIT, South Carolina	6-4/303	Soph.
T	ROBERT POOLE, Tennessee	6-3/291	Jr.
G	ALAN FANECIA, LSU	6-5/310	Soph.
G	JOHN SCHLARMAN, Kentucky	6-2/263	Jr.
C	JOHN CAUSEY, Alabama	6-2/262	Sr.
QB	DANNY WUERFFEL, Florida	6-2/209	Sr.
RB	MADRE HILL, Arkansas	6-1/193	Jr.
RB	ROBERT EDWARDS, Georgia	6-2/208	Jr.

DEFENSE

E	KURT SUPE, Kentucky	6-2/243	Sr.
T	JAMES GRIER, Mississippi State	6-6/307	Jr.
E	SHANNON SUTTLE, Auburn	6-4/282	Sr.
LB	RALPH STATEN, Alabama	6-4/200	Sr.
LB	TYRONE HINES, Tennessee	6-0/226	Sr.
LB	ALLEN STANSBERRY, LSU	6-1/225	Sr.
LB	TAKEO SPIKES, Auburn	6-2/224	Soph.
CB	DENARD WALKER, LSU	6-1/187	Sr.
CB	RAYMOND AUSTIN, Tennessee	5-11/181	Sr.
S	JASON PARKER, Tennessee	6-0/192	Sr.
S	MARTAVIUS HOUSTON, Auburn	6-1/214	Soph.

SPECIALISTS

K	TODD LATOURETTE, Arkansas	6-3/205	Soph.
P	CHAD KESSLER, LSU	6-1/197	Jr.
KR	KIO SANFORD, Kentucky	5-11/169	Jr.

ondary, led by head-hunting strong safety Ben Washington. If there's an All-SEC candidate on the unit, it's him. Joe Troupe has one corner nailed down. Arturo Freeman won a starting job at free safety as a freshman and should be more comfortable.

Defensive weaknesses: Take your pick, but start at the bottom line—the Gamecocks ranked last in the SEC in scoring defense, allowing 35 points a game. They were about equally bad against the run and the pass, ranking 11th in each. Tackling must improve. Sack leader Eric Sullivan is gone, but three other starters return up front. The linebacking corps is a huge question mark, though Florida transfer Darren Hambrick should be a big boost. Despite the inexperience, Scott likes the talent pool.

Special teams: Dependable Reed Morton begins his fourth year as Carolina's kicker. He has made 30-of-42 career kicks. Signee Courtney Leavitt was the top-ranked prep kicker in the nation and could be the punter from Day One. The Gamecocks should have one of the league's better return games with Staley and Terry Cousin.

Keys to success: Wright has to be Mr. Right for the offense, but the biggest key is shoring up the defense. Two new defensive assistants, as well as a banner recruiting class, must help now.

Outlook: Year No. 3 of Scott's rebuilding project will be a struggle. The Gamecocks better have a winning record by Halloween, because the November stretch consists of Tennessee and road trips to Florida and Clemson.

GAMECOCKS DATA

Coach: Brad Scott (11-11-1, 2 years).

1995 record: 4-6-1. SEC East: 2-5-1/4th.

Key losses: Aubrey Brooks, LB; Hank Campbell, LB; James Dexter, OT; Luther Dixon, C; Derwin Jeffcoat, P; Monty Means, WR; Ron Nealy, CB; Darrel Nicklow, WR; Stanley Pritchett, FB; Ronnie Smith, LB; Eric Sullivan, DT; Steve Taneyhill, QB.

Starters returning: Offense (5): Zola Davis, WR, 6-1/192, Soph.; Jamar Nesbit, T (moved from G), 6-4/303, Soph.; Duce Staley, TB, 5-11/207, Sr.; Randy Wheeler, T, 6-2/296, Sr.; Travis Whitfield, G, 6-4/295, Jr. Defense (6): Maynard Caldwell, E, 6-1/238, Sr.; Arturo Freeman, FS, 6-1/185, Soph.; Selvesta Miller, E, 6-3/245, Jr.; Henry Taylor, T, 6-1/274, Jr.; Joe Troupe, CB, 5-8/185, Sr.; Ben Washington, SS, 5-11/196, Jr. Kickers (1): Reed Morton, K, 5-8/183, Sr.

Other key returnees: Chad Barnhardt, QB, Soph.; Paul Beckwith, C, Jr.; Corey Bridges, WR, Sr.; Quinn Brodie, DT, Sr.; Shane Burnham, LB, Jr.; Terry Cousin, CB, Sr.; Kerry Hood, WR, Soph.; Jason Lawson, TE, Sr.; Reggie Richardson, CB, Sr. (RS/knee); Marcus Robinson, WR, Sr.; Anthony Wright, QB, Soph.; Benji Young, LB, Sr.

Top newcomers: Mike Curry, RB, Fr. (RS); Ben Fleming, WR, Fr. (RS); Ray Green, DB, Fr. (RS); Darren Hambrick, OLB, Jr. (transfer/Florida); Jermale Kelly, WR, Fr.; Courtney Leavitt, K/P, Fr.; Mark Love, LB, Jr. (transfer/Navy); Michael Maddox, DT, Jr. (RS/JC); Steve Mixon, FB, Fr. (RS); Jason Pomar, WR, Fr. (RS); Errol Rochester, LB, Fr. (RS); Travis Salley, DE, Soph. (transfer/Navy).

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Staley (127 att., 736 yds., 8 TD); Passing: Wright (27 att., 17 comp., 1 INT, 2 TD, 207 yds.); Receiving: Davis (58 rec., 911 yds., 9 TD); Tackles: Washington (93); Sacks: Caldwell (5.5).
Site: Columbia, S.C. Stadium: Williams-Brice (80,250).

Last league title won: None.

SCHEDULE

Sept. 7—Central Florida	Oct. 19—Arkansas
Sept. 14—Georgia	Oct. 26—at Vanderbilt
Sept. 21—East Carolina	Nov. 2—Tennessee
Sept. 28—Mississippi St.	Nov. 16—at Florida
Oct. 5—at Auburn	Nov. 23—at Clemson
Oct. 12—at Kentucky	

5. KENTUCKY

Offensive strengths: This category's up

for grabs since we can't count 3-point shooting. It would have been tailback Moe Williams, but after rushing for an SEC-high 1,600 yards, he turned pro a year early. Given his absence and the lack of a proven replacement, a strength might have been the return of three line starters. But then two-year starting guard Brandon Jackson got booted off the team. Guard John Schlarmann is pretty good, but he suffered a torn ACL in his left knee during spring ball. Tackle Jonas Lienen started every game as a redshirt freshman. Quarterbacking should be improved. Billy Jack Haskins will have to fight off freshman Tim Couch, considered by most as the top recruit in the nation.

Offensive weaknesses: The receiving corps doesn't knock anybody's socks off. Even with Williams, Kentucky still ranked 11th in the SEC in total offense, an indictment of the Wildcats' aerial abilities. The passing game always has lacked imagination, but coach Bill Curry predicts that will change in coordinator Elliot Uzelac's second year.

Defensive strengths: How about two veteran linebackers? Mike Schellenberger led the team in tackles at middle linebacker. He had double-figures tackles in six games last year and still had enough energy to play fullback in short-yardage situations. Outside linebacker Lamont Smith had four double-figure games. With Kurt Supe back at end after a broken arm ruined most of his junior season, the 'Cats have at least one legitimate pass rusher.

Defensive weaknesses: Strong safety Leman Boyd and cornerback Van Hiles are the only returning starters from a sec-



Kurt Supe led Kentucky in sacks with five last season despite missing most of the year.

ondary that had trouble making stops last year. The secondary didn't get much help up front. Kentucky recorded only 21 sacks last year, which ranked 10th in the league.

Special teams: The punting was bad last year, but the kicking was worse. Kentucky made just 6-of-14 field-goal attempts. Curry hopes JC kicker Tobin Anderson is the answer. Kio Sanford is a good kickoff return man and should get plenty of opportunities.

Key to success: Somebody—maybe Raymond McLaurin—has to come through big-time and fill Williams' shoes so the running game remains viable.

Outlook: Curry probably saved his job by landing Couch. Without Williams, somebody has to inject some life in the offense. Meanwhile, everybody always said Mike Archer was a proven defensive coordinator who just needed more players. Archer left for the NFL, so Rick Smith steps up to the hot seat. The 'Cats will battle Vandy and South Carolina to determine the pecking order in the bottom half of the East.

WILDCATS DATA

Coach: Bill Curry (22-45, 6 years; 79-98-4 overall, 16 years).

1995 record: 4-7. SEC East: 2-6/5th.

Key losses: Andy Britt, G; Steven Hall, CB; Brandon Jackson, G (dismissed from team); Barry Jones, OT; Donte' Key, DE; Marvin Major, DT (dismissed from team); Antonio O'Ferral, WR; Reggie Rusk, FS; Mike Schlegel, DT; Brian Slinkin, K; David Sardon, LB; James Tucker, WR; Moe Williams, TB (declared for NFL draft).

Starters returning: **Offense (5):** Marcus Cross, TE, 6-4/227, Jr.; Isaac Curtis, TE, 6-3/243, Sr.; Billy Jack Haskins, QB, 6-1/189, Jr.; Jonas Liening, T, 6-8/287, Soph.; John Schlaman, G (moved from C/status uncertain because of torn ACL in left knee), 6-2/263, Jr. **Defense (5):** Leman Boyd, SS, 5-10/205, Sr.; Van Hiles, CB/FS, 6-0/186, Sr.; Mike Schellenberger, MLB, 6-0/226, Sr.; Lamont Smith, OLB, 6-2/230, Jr.; Chris Ward, T (moved from E), 6-4/264, Sr. **Kickers (1):** Jimmy Carter, P, 6-0/174, Soph.

Other key returnees: Dele Ali, LB, Jr.; Kevin Coleman, WR, Soph.; DeAnthony Honaker, G, Sr.; Mark Jacobs, DT, Soph.; Brian Johnson, K, Jr.; Raymond McLaurin, TB, Sr.; Kio Sanford, WR/KR, Jr.; Jeremy Streck, OT (moved from DT), Soph.; Kurt Supe, DE, Sr.; Jason Thomas, DE, Soph.; Littleton Ward, CB, Jr.; Jason Watts, C, Soph.; Kiko Wilson, FS, Sr.; Tony Woods, CB, Soph.; Craig Yeast, WR, Soph.

Top newcomers: Tobin Anderson, K/P, Jr. (JC); Harold Bell, DE, Jr. (RS/JC); Tim Couch, QB, Fr.; Shamseldeen Arulogun, CB, Fr. (RS); Derick Logan, TB, Fr.; Marvin Love, WR, Jr.

(JC); Tremayne Martin, SS, Jr. (JC); George Massey, DT, Fr.; Andre' Smith, LB, Jr. (JC); Anwar Stewart, OLB, Fr. (RS); Anthony Watson, DE, Fr. (RS).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** McLaurin (60 att., 260 yds., 2 TD); **Passing:** Haskins (154 att., 93 comp., 6 INT, 4 TD, 1,176 yds.); **Receiving:** Yeast (24 rec., 337 yds., 2 TD); **Tackles:** Schellenberger (104); **Sacks:** Supe (5).

Site: Lexington, Ky. **Stadium:** Commonwealth (57,800).

Last league title won: 1976 (tie).

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—Louisville

Sept. 7—at Cincinnati

Sept. 21—Indiana

Sept. 28—at Florida

Oct. 5—at Alabama

Oct. 12—South Carolina

Oct. 19—at LSU

Oct. 26—Georgia

Nov. 9—Mississippi St.

Nov. 16—Vanderbilt

Nov. 23—at Tennessee

6. VANDERBILT

Offensive strengths: If there is a strength here, it's that the Commodores have a year of growth under their belts in the transition from Gerry DiNardo's option game to Rod Dowhower's pro-style offense. Last season was painful, and, essentially, most of the skill players Dowhower has to work with are guys who were recruited to suit DiNardo's scheme. Quarterback Damian Allen, who replaced Ronnie Gordon at mid-season, begins the season with more confidence in his passing ability.

Offensive weaknesses: It would be nice to say Vandy can at least fall back on its running game, but that would be a stretch. Jermaine Johnson and Cliff Deese are gone from a unit that slipped to last in the SEC in rushing, leaving virtually no experienced backs. A committee of backs will replace them. Duane Todd is the lone experienced receiver. Only two starters return on the line. This unit ranked last in the SEC in total offense by almost 100 yards per game behind the 11th-ranked team, scored one touchdown or less in seven games and committed 25 turnovers.

Defensive strengths: Ten starters are back to do coordinator Woody Widenhofer's bidding. Only All-SEC tackle James Manley is gone, but Brian Boykin, Jay Stallworth and Matt Schuckman still form a decent line. Jamie Duncan is an all-over-the-place linebacker. This is a unit that got better as the year progressed and played high-powered Tennessee to a standoff before falling, 12-7.

Defensive weaknesses: No doubt, Manley will be missed. The secondary also could miss free safety Marcus A. Williams, if a spring experiment at tailback takes hold.

Special teams: Punter Bill Marinangel, who ranked second in the SEC with a 42.7-yard average, is a good one. Given Vandy's offensive malaise, he gets lots of practice. The Commodores blocked five punts in '95 and most of the special-teamers are back, led by Fred Vinson. Brett Speakman figures to do the kicking.

Key to success: The defense has to keep games low-scoring in order for the offense to have any chance.

Outlook: Dowhower addressed two pressing needs in recruiting by signing seven offensive linemen and six receivers, but it may be awhile before any dividend checks can be cashed. If the Commodores can maintain their mysterious stranglehold on Kentucky (five consecutive victories), they have a chance at escaping the Eastern Division cellar.

THE PRESSURE'S ON

Auburn's Craig not just a goal-line QB anymore

Of the five or six plays in Auburn's goal-line offense playbook last season, one was dubbed "Dameyune" and another "Craig."

They were named for the quarterback who ran that offense and helped Auburn score 13 touchdowns in 13 goal-line situations during the regular season.

Dameyune Craig proved adept with an abbreviated playbook, but that no longer is enough. As Auburn's new starting quarterback, Craig—a fourth-year junior—now must have a firm grasp of the entire system while shouldering the responsibility that comes with his position.



Craig

"He needs to assume a leadership role on the team," coach Terry Bowden says.

"The only way I'm going to fulfill expectations is to win a national championship," says

Craig, who accounted for 10 touchdowns in 11 games last season.

Bowden isn't making the aspirations quite so lofty, but he does talk of winning the Western Division and Southeastern Conference titles after last season's 8-4 record. That followed two seasons in which Auburn went a combined 20-1-1 while on NCAA probation.

While Craig's showing will be critical to Auburn's fate, Bowden says his concern is that too much will be asked of the multi-talented Craig (6-1, 185). In talking of Craig's physical ability, Bowden and the strong-armed Craig offered comparisons to Charlie Ward, Florida State's 1993 Heisman Trophy winner.

"I think the concern is that we as coaches expect too much," Bowden says. "We'll tell him to do too much. The fear is us more than him."

Auburn's most valuable player in the 1994 and '95 spring games, Craig finished third on the team in total offense last season with 390 yards, going 28-of-40 for 268 yards and four touchdowns and rushing 22 times for 122 yards and six touchdowns.

Bowden says Craig was good enough "to start for most teams in America" last year, but Bowden went with fifth-year senior Patrick Nix in hopes of avoiding a quarterback controversy.

Craig hopes to incorporate his many physical tools with Nix's dropback style to develop into a quarterback with the consistency to succeed on a full-time basis.

—DAVE MOORMAN

COMMODORES DATA

Coach: Rod Dowhower (2-9, 1 year; 4-10-1 overall, 2 years).
1995 record: 2-9. SEC East: 1-7/6th.

Key losses: Robert Couch, OT; Cliff Deese, RB; Jermaine Johnson, RB; Mike Jones, G; Royce Love, RB; James Manley, DT; Sanford Ware, WR; Chad Wood, G; Steve Yenner, K.

Starters returning: **Offense (5):** Damian Allen, QB, 6-2/184, Jr.; Jim Anguiano, C, 6-2/268, Soph.; Allen DeGraffenreid, T, 6-4/271, Sr.; Duane Todd, WR, 6-3/210, Jr.; Jason Tomichuk, TE, 6-3/254, Sr. **Defense (10):** Brian Boykin, E, 6-3/270, Sr.; Corey Chavous, CB, 6-0/202, Soph.; Jamie Duncan, LB, 6-1/230, Jr.; DeReal Finklin, CB, 5-9/183, Sr.; Carlton Hall, LB, 6-0/235, Jr.; Mark Jelcoat, LB, 6-2/224, Sr.; Matt Schuckman, T, 6-4/260, Sr.; Jay Stallworth, E, 6-2/255, Jr.; Eric Vance, SS, 6-3/214, Sr.; Marcus A. Williams, FS (may move to TB), 6-0/197, Jr. **Kickers (1):** Bill Marinangel, P, 6-2/215, Sr.

Other key returnees: Rahim Batten, FS, Soph.; Clay Condrey, OT, Soph.; David Coppeans, OT, Soph.; Jason Dunnivant, RB, Soph.; Marcus Forrest, RB, Jr.; Alphonso Harvey, DT, Soph.; Will Jacobs, G, Jr.; Derrick May, G, Soph.; Paul Morgan, RB, Jr.; Myron Murray, G, Soph.; Robert Simmons, WR, Jr.; Jason Smith, DT, Soph.; Brett Speakman, K, Soph.; Fred Vinson, CB, Soph.; Kirk Williams, LB, Sr.; Tyrone Yarbrough, RB, Jr.

Top newcomers: Teremy Banks, FS, Fr. (RS); Jamail Carter, QB, Fr. (RS); Bubba Dixon, TB, Fr.; Alvin Duke, RB, Fr. (RS); Tavarus Hogans, WR, Fr.; Hi Lewis, QB, Fr. (RS); Jason Smith, LB, Fr.

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Marinangel (2 att., 34 yds., 0 TD); **Passing:** Allen (136 att., 62 comp., 7 INT, 4 TD, 728 yds.); **Receiving:** Todd (21 rec., 289 yds., 1 TD); **Tackles:** Duncan (120); **Sacks:** Stallworth (6).

Site: Nashville, Tenn. **Stadium:** Vanderbilt (41,600).
Last league title won: None.

SCHEDULE

Sept. 5—Notre Dame	Oct. 26—South Carolina
Sept. 14—at Alabama	Nov. 2—Ala.-Birmingham
Sept. 21—Mississippi	Nov. 9—Florida
Oct. 5—at LSU	Nov. 16—at Kentucky
Oct. 12—at North Texas	Nov. 30—Tennessee
Oct. 19—at Georgia	

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WESTERN DIVISION

1. AUBURN

Offensive strengths: Plenty of talented receivers return, which should make it easier for junior quarterback Dameyune Craig, who finally gets a chance to show why there has been such anticipation about his move into the starting lineup. In limited action last season, Craig still finished third on the team in total offense with 390 yards.

Offensive weaknesses: The line will be hard-pressed to replace two four-year starters and an early defector to the NFL. That doesn't bode well for a running game that has tried to compensate for the loss of 1,000-yard rusher Stephen Davis by moving Fred Beasley from fullback to tailback. Beasley was Davis' backup at tailback as a freshman before switching to fullback before his sophomore season.

Defensive strengths: Having nine starters back is encouraging. Marcellus Mostella (SEC-leading 128 tackles) is the leader of a strong linebacking corps that also features Terry Solomon and rising star Takeo Spikes. Sophomore nose tackle Jimmy Brumbaugh appears headed for big things.

Defensive weaknesses: Depth, particularly along the front, is a concern. If the Tigers are susceptible anywhere, it's in the secondary, but at least they have sophomore strong safety Martavius Houston.

Special teams: The departure of kicker/punter Matt Hawkins presents problems. JC transfer Jaret Holmes is a

likely replacement, although Kevin Gentle could challenge. Robert Baker again will return kicks.

Key to success: Craig must fulfill at least some of the promise that he displayed in practice and in goal-line situations last season. There's no question about his athletic ability. He needs to incorporate his skills into the game plan and make the right decisions with consistency.

Outlook: A soft early-season schedule almost guarantees the Tigers a quick start in their race to win the West. Some restlessness exists since Auburn lost more games last season (four) than it had in the first two years combined under coach Terry Bowden. But there's no need to panic, Tigers fans.

TIGERS DATA

Coach: Terry Bowden (28-4-1, 3 years; 92-40-2 overall, 12 years).

1995 record: 8-4 (lost to Penn State in Outback Bowl). SEC West: 5-3/T2nd.

Key losses: Willie Anderson, OT (declared for NFL draft); Stephen Davis, TB; Andy Fuller, TE; Anthony Harris, LB; Matt Hawkins, P/K; Dell McGee, CB; Jason Miska, LB; Patrick Nix, QB; Shannon Roubique, C; Scott Stacey, DE; Jason Taylor, G.

Starters returning: **Offense (5):** Fred Beasley, TB (moved from FB), 6-0/215, Jr.; Tyrone Goodson, WR, 6-2/175, Jr.; Willie Goshie, WR, 6-1/168, Sr.; Victor Riley, T, 6-5/319, Jr.; Leonard Thomas, G, 6-2/294, Sr. **Defense (9):** Jimmy Brumbaugh, NT, 6-1/266, Soph.; Martavius Houston, SS, 6-1/214, Soph.; Larry Melton, CB, 5-11/192, Jr.; Marcellus Mostella, OLB, 6-3/235, Sr.; Charles Rose, FS, 6-0/199, Sr.; Mark Smith, E, 6-4/272, Sr.; Terry Solomon, OLB, 6-2/232, Sr.; Takeo Spikes, ILB, 6-2/224, Soph.; Shannon Suttle, E, 6-4/282, Jr. **Kickers:** None.

Other key returnees: Robert Baker, WR/KR, Soph.; Dameyune Craig, QB, Jr.; Kevin Cummings, G, Jr.; DeMarcus Curry, OT, Soph.; Bobby Daffin, OLB, Jr.; Dan Evans, CB, Soph.; Kevin Gentle, K, Soph.; Eric Hines-Tucker, TB, Sr.; James Kiger, C, Jr.; Erick Lowe, WR, Soph.; Jessie McCoverly, TE, Sr.; Kevin McLeod, FB, Jr.; Ricky Neal, OLB, Jr.; Jim Roe, OT, Sr.; Nate Smith, DE, Jr.; Ryan Taylor, DE, Soph.; Liron Thomas, FS, Sr.; Tyreece Williams, CB, Jr. **Top newcomers:** Barrett Askew, LB, Fr. (RS); Stan Bellamy, LB, Fr. (RS); Ben Elliott, G, Fr. (RS); Telle Embery, RB, Fr.; Jaret Holmes, K/P, Jr. (JC); Jeno James, OT, Fr. (RS); Cencade Pennington, TB, Fr. (RS).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Beasley (66 att., 346 yds., 5 TD); **Passing:** Craig (40 att., 28 comp., 1 INT, 4 TD, 268 yds.); **Receiving:** Goshie (58 rec., 668 yds., 0 TD); **Tackles:** Mostella (128); **Sacks:** Solomon (9).
Site: Auburn, Ala. **Stadium:** Jordan-Hare (85,214).
Last league title won: 1989 (tie).

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—Ala.-Birmingham	Oct. 19—at Florida
Sept. 7—Fresno State	Nov. 2—Arkansas
Sept. 14—at Mississippi	Nov. 9—NE Louisiana
Sept. 21—LSU	Nov. 16—Georgia
Oct. 5—South Carolina	Nov. 23—Alabama
Oct. 12—at Mississippi St.	(at Birmingham)

2. LSU

Offensive strengths: The Tigers' most experienced line—headlined by guard Alan Faneca—in years will offer protection for a stout running game featuring sophomore tailbacks Kevin Faulk and Kendall Cleveland. A late-season injury to quarterback Jamie Howard thrust then-freshman quarterback Herb Tyler into a starting role, and Tyler emerged with a 4-0 record. He'll look often to gigantic David LaFleur, one of the nation's top tight ends.

Offensive weaknesses: LSU went almost exclusively with a one-back set last season because it couldn't find a fullback. The Tigers still are looking. In addition, the receivers are young, and depth along the line must be developed.

Defensive strengths: Tackles Anthony



Outside linebacker Marcellus Mostella will be the leader of what should be a tough Auburn defense.

McFarland and Chuck Wiley could be among the best in the SEC. McFarland also played fullback on occasion and caught a touchdown pass. Allen Stansberry, last season's leading tackler with 109, boosts a linebacking group that will be strengthened further by the return of senior middle linebacker Mike Calais, who sat out last season while recovering from injuries.

Defensive weaknesses: Standout ends Gabe Northern and James Gillyard have departed. Two starters in the secondary—as well as depth—must be developed. Regardless, the defense will continue to play an aggressive man-to-man in the secondary after leading the SEC in scoring defense and pass-efficiency defense last season.

Special teams: LSU has some strong legs in punter Chad Kessler and kicker Wade Richey. An All-SEC selection, Kessler led the league with a 44.1-yard average. Richey assumes kicking duties after hitting a 48-yarder in the Independence Bowl, his only attempt last season. Return man Eddie Kennison will be difficult to replace.

Key to success: In its first season under coach Gerry DiNardo, LSU realized its first winning season and first bowl appearance since the 1988 season. Now that the Tigers are expected to win, they must avoid a letdown. A schedule that dumped Texas A&M and South Carolina for Houston and Vanderbilt will help.

Outlook: If LSU finds a way to compensate for the losses at wide receiver and defensive end, the Tigers should be a contender. Tyler isn't flashy, but he doesn't make many mistakes. Pencil in LSU for a bowl bid.

TIGERS DATA

Coach: Gerry DiNardo (7-4-1, 1 year; 26-29-1 overall, 5 years).

1995 record: 7-4-1 (beat Michigan State in Independence Bowl). SEC West: 4-3-1/4th.

Key losses: Talvi Crawford, SS; Robert Deshotel, MLB; James Gillyard, DE; Tony James, CB; Eddie Kennison,

WR/KR; Mark King, G; Andre' Lafleur, K; Gabe Northern, DE; Sheddric Wilson, WR.

Starters returning: Offense (7): Ben Bordelon, T, 6-6/293, Sr.; Marcus Carmouche, C, 6-3/291, Sr.; Alan Faneca, G, 6-5/310, Soph.; Kevin Faulk, TB, 5-10/192, Soph.; David LaFleur, TE, 6-7/278, Sr.; Nicky Savoie, FB, 6-6/239, Sr.; Sean Wells, T, 6-4/291, Sr. **Defense (6):** Clarence Lenton, FS, 5-11/188, Sr.; Anthony McFarland, T, 6-1/290, Soph.; Pat Rogers, OLB, 5-11/230, Sr.; Allen Stansberry, OLB, 6-1/225, Sr.; Denard Walker, CB, 6-1/187, Sr.; Chuck Wiley, T, 6-4/274, Jr. **Kickers (1):** Chad Kessler, P, 6-1/197, Jr.

Other key returnees: Chris Beard, WR, Soph.; Mike Calais, MLB, Sr. (RS); Trey Champagne, OT, Sr.; Kendall Cleveland, TB, Soph.; Kevin Franklin, WR (moved from TB), Sr.; Greg Hill, SS, Soph.; Melvin Hill, QB, Jr.; Todd McClure, C, Soph.; Arnold Miller, DE, Soph.; Kenny Mixon, DE, Jr.; Brad Poole, WR, Jr.; Wade Richey, K, Jr.; Markeith Spears, MLB, Soph.; Ryan Thomassie, G, Soph.; Troy Tillie, CB, Jr.; Herb Tyler, QB, Soph.; Joe Wesley, OLB, Soph.

Top newcomers: Yahmani Adams, WR, Jr. (JC); Cecil Collins, TB, Fr.; Larry Foster, WR, Fr. (RS); Monte Gatlin, MLB, Fr. (RS); Ryan Hebert, OT, Fr. (RS); Roshawn Matthews, DE, Fr. (RS); Naeshall Menard, G, Fr. (RS); Johnny Mitchell, DL, Fr.; Jamal Pack, TE, Fr. (RS); Charles Smith, LB, Fr. (RS); Damien Tullier, DT, Fr. (RS); Derrion Yates, DE, Fr.

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Faulk (174 att., 852 yds., 6 TD); Passing: Tyler (69 att., 45 comp., 2 INT, 5 TD, 589 yds.); Receiving: LaFleur (12 rec., 120 yds., 0 TD);

Tackles: Stansberry (109); **Sacks:** Wiley (7).

Site: Baton Rouge, La. **Stadium:** Tiger (79,940).

Last league title won: 1988 (tie).

SCHEDULE

Sept. 7—Houston	Oct. 26—Mississippi State
Sept. 21—at Auburn	Nov. 9—Alabama
Sept. 28—New Mexico St.	Nov. 16—at Mississippi
Oct. 5—Vanderbilt	Nov. 23—Tulane
Oct. 12—at Florida	Nov. 30—at Arkansas
Oct. 19—Kentucky	(at Little Rock)

3. ALABAMA

Offensive strengths: A change in philosophy might make more of an impact than any player. Woody McCorvey was promoted to coordinator and simplified the offense, much to the satisfaction of conservative coach Gene Stallings. It helps, too, that Alabama has a pair of dangerous tailbacks in Dennis Riddle and Curtis Alexander. Keep an eye on tailback Shaun Alexander, a heralded recruit who got bigger and stronger as a redshirt last season.

Offensive weaknesses: After Ed Scissum, there's no one at fullback. Four starting linemen return, but their protection skills are questionable. Quarterback is unsettled—again. Junior Freddie Kitchens is battling sophomore Warren Foust. Like the quarterbacks, the receiving corps scares absolutely no one.

Defensive strengths: Under new coordinator Mike Dubose, Alabama promises to be more aggressive and apply more pressure. The Tide should have no problem fulfilling Dubose's wish, thanks to outside linebacker Dwayne Rudd and a strong line led by end Darrell Blackburn. New secondary coach Curley Hallman, LSU's former coach, has Alabama playing more man-to-man than usual. He has loads of talent to work with, including strong safety Kevin Jackson and cornerback Deshea Townsend.

Defensive weaknesses: It's hard to find any. Alabama returns six starters to a unit that led the league and finished ninth in the nation in total defense last season. The most difficulty the players may encounter is adjusting to Dubose and Hallman.

Special teams: Alabama lost All-America kicker Michael Proctor and will rely on a walk-on to replace him. Hayden Stockton,



Linebacker Allen Stansberry was a major reason LSU led the SEC in scoring defense last season.

who averaged 40.9 yards per punt last season, returns.

Key to success: The offense has to supply some offensive punch to complement a solid defense that can't carry the load every week. Does that sound familiar?

Outlook: Alabama's offense needs direction. That's why the selection of a quarterback is so important. Kitchens has better dropback ability, which he displayed at times last season. But Foust provides the mobility that Stallings likes. No matter the choice, Alabama will contend because of its defense.

CRIMSON TIDE DATA

Coach: Gene Stallings (52-22, 6 years; 79-67-1 overall, 13 years). **1995 record:** 8-3. SEC West: 5-3/2nd.

Key losses: Maurice Belsler, G; Curtis Brown, WR; Shannon Brown, DT; Brian Burgdorf, QB; Kendrick Burton, DE; Tony Johnson, TE; Toderick Malone, WR; Matt Parker, DT; Michael Proctor, K; John Walters, MLB.

Starters returning: Offense (7): John Causey, C, 6-2/262, Sr.; Pete DiMario, T, 6-4/276, Sr.; Joel Holaday, T, 6-3/292, Jr.; Freddie Kitchens, QB, 6-2/230, Jr.; Dennis Riddle, TB, 6-0/195, Jr.; Ed Scissum, FB, 6-0/210, Jr.; Laron White, G, 6-2/275, Sr. **Defense (6):** Darrell Blackburn, E, 6-4/224, Sr.; Kevin Jackson, SS, 6-1/200, Sr.; Dwayne Rudd, OLB, 6-2/232, Jr.; Cedric Samuel, FS, 5-9/186, Sr.; Ralph Staten, OLB, 6-4/200, Sr.; Deshea Townsend, CB, 5-10/170, Jr.

Kickers (1): Hayden Stockton, P, 6-0/204, Sr.

Other key returnees: Curtis Alexander, TB, Jr.; Fernando Bryant, CB, Soph.; Tyrell Buckner, MLB, Sr.; Fernando Davis, MLB, Sr.; Warren Foust, QB, Soph.; Will Friend, G, Jr.; Patrick Hape, TE, Sr.; Chris Hood, DE, Soph.; Eric Kerley, DT, Jr.; Kelvin Moore, DE, Sr.; John David Phillips, QB, Soph. (RS/injury); Paul Pickett, OLB, Jr. (RS/back); Ozell Powell, DT, Sr.; Rod Rutledge, TE, Jr.; Andre Short, SS, Jr.; Sage Spree, OT, Soph.; Brian Steger, TB, Sr.; Michael Vaughn, WR, Soph.; Marcell West, WR, Sr.

Top newcomers: Shaun Alexander, TB, Fr. (RS); Shamari Buchanan, WR, Fr. (RS); Reggie Grimes, FB, Fr. (RS); Thomas Hill, CB, Fr. (RS); Jason McDonald, OT, Fr. (RS); Brenon Meadows, C, Jr. (transfer/Louisville); Michael Moore, C, Fr. (RS); Michael Myers, DT, Jr. (JC); Chris Samuels, OT, Fr. (RS); Kenny Smith, DL, Fr.; Clint Waggoner, DE, Fr. (RS).

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Riddle (236 att., 969 yds., 8 TD); Passing: Kitchens (127 att., 63 comp., 5 INT, 3 TD, 811 yds.); Receiving: Riddle (23 rec., 150 yds., 1 TD); Tackles: Rudd (91); Sacks: Blackburn (10).

Site: Tuscaloosa, Ala. **Stadium:** Bryant-Denny (70,123)/Birmingham's Legion Field (83,091).

Last league title won: 1992.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—Bowling Green (at Birmingham)	Oct. 12—at N.C. State
Sept. 7—Southern Miss (at Birmingham)	Oct. 19—Mississippi
Sept. 14—Vanderbilt	Oct. 26—at Tennessee
Sept. 21—at Arkansas (at Little Rock)	Nov. 9—at Louisiana State
Oct. 5—Kentucky	Nov. 16—at Mississippi St.
	Nov. 23—Auburn (at Birmingham)

4. ARKANSAS

Offensive strengths: If tailbacks Oscar Malone and Madre Hill return to health, the defending Western Division champions will have a top-notch running attack. Malone sat out last season with a knee injury; a late-season knee injury forced Hill to miss spring practice, but he is expected back after gaining a school-record 1,387 yards last season. They'll work behind a stronger, more experienced and athletic line. Anthony Eubanks and Anthony Lucas form a solid receiving tandem.

Offensive weaknesses: Replacing four-year starting quarterback Barry Lunney won't be easy. Sophomore Pete Burks has a stronger arm and runs better than Lunney but lacks experience. True freshmen will back up Burks.

Defensive strengths: Geno Bell may be the SEC's best nose tackle after moving there from tackle. Arkansas also has a pair of skilled linebackers in Mark Smith and Vincent Bradford. Smith, an All-SEC pick, made 115 tackles to lead Arkansas for the second consecutive season. Bradford followed with 97 stops.

Defensive weaknesses: The secondary will feature more speed than last year's edition, but all four projected starters are new. That means new coordinator Miles Aldridge won't have the Hogs blitzing as often as last season.

Special teams: The kickers are solid. Matt Wait averaged 38.6 yards per punt last season. Todd Latourette made 14-of-21 field-goal attempts. Cory Nichols is a dangerous return man.

Key to success: Arkansas must find the confidence and enthusiasm that made it the surprise winner of the West in '95. An early upset could offer some encouragement after the disappointing end to their championship season.

Outlook: No matter how many skill players the Razorbacks have on offense, it can't make up for inexperience at quarterback. The defense doesn't seem equipped to shoulder the responsibility to carry the team, so the Hogs shouldn't make any bowl plans.

RAZORBACKS DATA

Coach: Danny Ford (17-17-1, 3 years); 113-47-4 overall, 14 years).

1995 record: 8-5 (lost to North Carolina in Carquest Bowl). SEC West: 6-2/1st.

Key losses: Marcus Adair, DE; Spencer Brown, CB; Tracy Cantello, CB; Steven Conley, DE; Del Delco, SS; Barry Lunney, QB; J.J. Meadors, WR; Veri Mitchell, G; Mike Nunnerley, FS; Earl Scott, C; Junior Soli, NG.

Starters returning: Offense (7): Winston Alderson, T, 6-4/288, Sr.; Mark Baker, TE, 6-3/241, Jr.; Russ Brown, G, 6-0/273, Soph.; Anthony Eubanks, WR, 6-2/194, Jr.; Madre Hill, TB, 6-1/193, Jr.; Anthony Lucas, WR, 6-3/187, Soph.; Carlos Showers, T, 6-5/278, Sr. **Defense (4):** Geno Bell, NG (moved from T), 6-2/276, Sr.; Vincent Bradford, LB, 6-2/217, Sr.; David Sanders, T, 6-4/270, Jr.; Mark Smith, OLB, 6-3/229, Sr. **Kickers (2):** Todd Latourette, K, 6-3/205, Soph.; Matt Wait, P, 5-10/221, Jr. **Other key returnees:** Chris Akins, CB, Soph.; Ken Anderson,

DT, Jr.; Justin Brown, DE, Soph.; Pete Burks, QB, Soph.; Grant Garrett, C, Soph.; DeAnthony Hall, SS, Soph.; Philip Hayes, FS, Jr.; Michael Henry, OT, Soph.; Tyrone Henry, FB, Jr.; Anthony Hicks, LB, Sr.; Oscar Malone, TB, Sr. (RS/knee); C.J. McLain, LB, Soph.; Cory Nichols, TB/KR, Soph.

Top newcomers: D.J. Cooper, DT, Fr. (RS); Randy Garner, DE, Fr.; Chadd Jones, QB, Fr.; Bryan Smith, DE, Fr.; Emanuel Smith, WR, Fr. (RS); Clint Stoerner, QB, Fr.

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Hill (307 att., 1,387 yds., 15 TD); Passing: Burks (6 att., 2 comp., 1 INT, 0 TD, 14 yds.); Receiving: Eubanks (43 rec, 596 yds., 4 TD); Tackles: Smith (115); Sacks: Bell (4).

Site: Fayetteville, Ark. **Stadium:** Razorback (51,000)/Little Rock's War Memorial (53,727).

Last league title won: None.

SCHEDULE

Sept. 7—SMU	Nov. 2—at Auburn
Sept. 21—Alabama	Nov. 9—Mississippi
(at Little Rock)	Nov. 16—Tennessee
Sept. 28—NE Louisiana	Nov. 23—at Mississippi St.
(at Little Rock)	Nov. 30—LSU
Oct. 5—Florida	(at Little Rock)
Oct. 12—Louisiana Tech	
(at Little Rock)	
Oct. 19—at South Carolina	

5. MISSISSIPPI STATE

Offensive strengths: The Bulldogs return a 2,000-yard passer (Derrick Taite), a 1,000-yard rusher (Keffer McGee) and three starting linemen. Taite will become the school's career passing leader this year. He's complemented by McGee, who became just the third 1,000-yard rusher in school history.

Offensive weaknesses: Thank goodness Taite has McGee and three returning linemen because he must operate without last year's three leading receivers. At least guards Brad Ainsworth and Henry McCann and tackle Brent Smith offer Taite the promise of protection. The Bulldogs also must adapt to the ways of new coordinator Lynn Amedee, a veteran of the SEC who spent last year coaching in high school after having served most recently at LSU.

Defensive strengths: Among the seven returning starters are tackle James Grier and inside linebacker Dwayne Curry, which should make it easier to adopt the aggressive, blitzing scheme preached by new coordinator Joe Lee Dunn. Curry is one of the SEC's best.

Defensive weaknesses: The secondary is vulnerable, particularly since the two JC transfers expected to start at cornerback weren't eligible to practice in the spring. Izell McGill, the only returning cornerback, broke his leg and couldn't practice, either. Overall depth isn't very good.

Special teams: The return of punter Andy Russ and kicker Brian Hazelwood will bolster the Bulldogs. Russ averaged 41.4 yards per punt in '95. After taking over with four games left, Hazelwood made 4-of-5 field-goal attempts. Michael Brown may become the top return man.

Key to success: Taite must harness his skills and stay healthy while becoming comfortable with Amedee's system. Also, McGee must at least duplicate what he did last season to take the pressure off Taite.

Outlook: Embattled coach Jackie Sherrill is hoping that two new coordinators can turn around the program and produce a winner that would provide him security. But optimism does not flow freely from those who follow Mississippi State.

BULLDOGS DATA

Coach: Jackie Sherrill (28-28-2, 5 years; 133-73-4 overall, 18 years).

1995 record: 3-8. SEC West: 1-7/6th.

Key losses: Brian Anderson, C; Bernard Euell, DB; Walt Harris, DB; Chris Jones, WR; Eric Moulds, WR; Corey Sears, DT; Larry Williams, DE; Brian Wright, OT.

Starters returning: **Offense (7):** Brad Ainsworth, G, 6-2/294, Sr.; Nakia Greer, FB, 5-10/227, Jr.; John Jennings, TE, 6-4/226, Soph.; Henry McCann, G, 6-6/327, Sr.; Keffer McGee, RB, 5-10/202, Jr.; Brent Smith, T, 6-6/275, Sr.; Derrick Taite, QB, 6-4/194, Sr. **Defense (7):** Dwayne Curry, ILB, 6-3/248, Sr.; Terry Day, T, 6-5/281, Sr.; Gregory Favors, OLB, 6-3/228, Jr.; James Grier, T, 6-6/307, Jr.; Paul Lacoste, ILB, 6-2/239, Sr.; Jimmy Lipscomb, SS, 5-10/185, Sr.; Izell McGill, CB, 5-10/161, Jr. **Kickers (2):** Brian Hazelwood, K, 6-0/175, Soph.; Andy Russ, P, 6-0/186, Sr.

Other key returnees: Michael Brown, WR, Jr.; Eric Daniel, SS, Soph.; Anthony Derricks, FS, Soph.; Eric Dotson, NT, Jr.; Cameron Floyd, WR, Jr.; Raymond Gee, DT, Sr.; Lahtia Grant, WR, Soph.; Robert Hicks, OT, Jr.; Dan Hoover, C, Sr.; Jeremy Jones, WR, Soph.; Reginald Kelly, TE, Soph.; Michael Lindsey, DT, Sr.; Chauncey McGee, CB, Soph.; Derek Rush, DE, Jr. **Top newcomers:** Lamont Dumas, CB, Jr. (JC); Jamil Graham, DE, Fr. (RS); Cornell Menafee, DE, Fr. (RS); Paul Mooney, OT, Fr. (RS); Rob Morgan, QB, Fr. (RS); Kendall Roberson, FS, Fr. (RS); Anthony Williams, CB, Jr. (JC); Lamont Woodberry, WR, Jr. (JC).

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: McGee (235 att., 1,072 yds., 13 TD); Passing: Taite (309 att., 165 comp., 11 INT, 16 TD, 2,241 yds.); Receiving: McGee (27 rec., 295 yds., 2 TD); Tackles: Curry (113); Sacks: Gee (3).

Site: Starkville, Miss. **Stadium:** Scott Field (40,656).

Last league title won: 1941.

SCHEDULE

Sept. 7—at Memphis	Nov. 2—NE Louisiana
Sept. 21—Louisiana Tech	Nov. 9—at Kentucky
Sept. 28—at South Carolina	Nov. 16—Alabama
Oct. 5—Georgia	Nov. 23—Arkansas
Oct. 12—Auburn	Nov. 30—at Mississippi
Oct. 26—at LSU	

6. MISSISSIPPI

Offensive strengths: NCAA probation has reduced the Rebels' numbers, but Ole Miss does have size. Tight end Kris Mangum is being touted as an All-American candidate. Three starting linemen return, including Skip Joyce, who has moved from tackle to center. Quarterback Paul Head led Ole Miss to victories in three of its final four games.

Offensive weaknesses: It remains to be seen whether running back Artie Moore can make people forget Dou Innocent. Moore enjoyed a productive spring, but he played sparingly last year after sitting out two seasons. The receivers lack experience.

Defensive strengths: Ole Miss returns strong safety Walker Jones, linebacker Kyle Wicker and cornerback Derek Jones, three of its top four tacklers in 1995. Derek Jones, who headlines a solid secondary, also intercepted three passes.

Defensive weaknesses: Despite the presence of the Joneses, the secondary has work to do. There's good speed, which means coverage mistakes could be erased. The line lacks strength, as six of the top 10 linemen have departed. Like most areas, depth on defense is a problem.

Special teams: It's some consolation that the Rebels return kicker Tim Montz, who hit 13-of-19 field-goal attempts last season, including 4-of-9 from 40 yards or longer. But they must replace punter Lonny Calicchio. Expect Randall Green to get the job. Moore and TaBoris Fisher will return kicks.

Key to success: Ole Miss, which has been able to sign only 13 players in each of



Senior tight end Kris Mangum could be one of the few bright spots for the Mississippi offense.

the past two years because of NCAA sanctions, must avoid injuries to have any kind of chance. The Rebels were able to sneak up on some teams last season, but they won't have that luxury this year.

Outlook: With fewer scholarship players (58) than allowed even in Division I-AA, it makes sense for Ole Miss, in the second year of probation and unable to go to a bowl, to open the season against two I-AA teams. But reality quickly will set in for the Rebels when they host Auburn.

REBELS DATA

Coach: Tommy Tuberville (6-5, 1 year).

1995 record: 6-5. SEC West: 3-5/5th.

Key losses: Renard Brown, DE; Lonny Calicchio, P; Keith Campbell, FS; Ed Fortson, DT; Dou Innocent, RB; Michael Lowery, LB; Josh Nelson, QB; LeMay Thomas, WR; Paul Winfield, LB.

Starters returning: **Offense (7):** Damon Billbrew, WR, 5-11/160, Sr.; Omar Edwards, T, 6-4/280, Jr.; TaBoris Fisher, WR, 5-8/170, Sr.; Paul Head, QB, 6-0/190, Sr.; Skip Joyce, C (moved from T), 6-2/290, Sr.; Kris Mangum, TE, 6-5/240, Sr.; Shannon Provencher, G, 6-2/270, Sr. **Defense (5):** Devon Coburn, T, 6-3/260, Jr.; Derek Jones, CB, 5-9/170, Sr.; Walker Jones, SS, 6-3/210, Jr.; Gary Thigpen, CB, 5-9/161, Soph.; Kyle Wicker, MLB, 6-2/225, Sr. **Kickers (1):** Tim Montz, K, 6-0/185, Sr.

Other key returnees: Lawrence Adams, FS, Sr.; Jonathan Casey, G, Sr.; David Evans, DT, Sr.; Randall Green, P, Jr.; Andre Hollis, WR, Sr.; Boyd Kitchen, OT, Jr. (RS/injury); Broc Kreitz, OLB, Jr.; Artie Moore, RB, Sr.; Stewart Patridge, QB, Jr. (RS); Morris Scott, DE, Soph.; Orlando Trainer, OT, Sr.; Nate Wayne, OLB, Jr.; Quentin Wilson, DE, Sr.

Top newcomers: John Avery, RB, Jr. (JC); Tony Cannon, RB, Soph. (transfer/Georgia Tech); Jason Clingan, WR, Fr. (RS); Joey Embry, G, Fr. (RS); Ken Judon, DE, Fr. (RS); Andre Rone, WR, Jr. (JC); Thurman Thomas, DB, Fr.; Todd Wade, G, Fr. (RS).

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Moore (40 att., 217 yds., 1 TD); Passing: Head (113 att., 70 comp., 2 INT, 6 TD, 748 yds.); Receiving: Fisher (45 rec., 493 yds., 4 TD); Tackles: Walker Jones (90); Sacks: Wayne (3.5).

Site: Oxford, Miss. **Stadium:** Vaught-Hemingway (42,577).

Last league title won: 1963.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—Idaho State	Oct. 26—Arkansas St.
Sept. 7—VMI (at Jackson, Miss.)	Nov. 9—at Arkansas
Sept. 14—Auburn	Nov. 16—LSU
Sept. 21—at Vanderbilt	Nov. 23—at Georgia
Oct. 3—Tennessee (at Memphis)	Nov. 30—Mississippi St.
Oct. 19—at Alabama	

Dave Moorman covers the SEC for the Baton Rouge (La.) Advocate.

SCOUTING THE SEC

Ascending: LSU. After their first winning season since 1988, the Tigers are poised for a run at the West title if things fall into place. The arrival of a big-time recruiting class only adds to the momentum. Also, Georgia will get a boost from Jim Donnan's hiring.

Descending: Technically, Mississippi State descended last year, going from 8-4 to 3-8. There aren't a lot of signs things are ready to improve in 1996, so last year probably wasn't a fluke.

Nightmare schedule: Vanderbilt. The Commodores better find some victories in the middle of the schedule. They open against Notre Dame and Alabama, then finish with Florida and Tennessee sandwiched around Kentucky.

Dream schedule: Tennessee plays nine games within its state. That includes road games at Memphis and Vandy, where Big Orange fans have a way of taking over stadiums. Ole Miss moved its home game from Oxford to Memphis for a nice guarantee. The Vols' only trips into hostile territories are journeys to Georgia and South Carolina.

Best matchup: Florida at Tennessee, September 21. The SEC East title will be on the line, and there will be important national ramifications. This has become a big rivalry over the past five years.

Worst matchup: August 31 is one bad matchup. Take your pick among Southwestern Louisiana at Florida, UNLV at Tennessee or Alabama-Birmingham at Auburn. In comparison, Idaho State at Ole Miss looks to be competitive.

Bowl bound: Florida, Tennessee, LSU, Auburn, Alabama and maybe even Georgia won't be home for the holidays.

Biggest shoes to fill: Arkansas QB Barry Lunney's and South Carolina QB Steve Taneyhill's. Pete Burks (at Arkansas) and Anthony Wright (at South Carolina) will have to replace four-year

HONOR ROLL

Best offensive backfield:	Tennessee.
Best wide receivers:	Florida.
Best offensive line:	Florida.
Best defensive line:	Alabama.
Best linebackers:	Alabama.
Best secondary:	Florida.
Best special teams:	Florida.
Hardest hitter:	Lawrence Wright, SS, Florida.
Best backup quarterback:	Eric Kresser, Florida.
Best pro prospect:	Peyton Manning, QB, Tennessee.
Best game-day atmosphere:	Tennessee.

RANKING THE RECRUITING

Top recruit in parentheses

1. LSU (DE Derrion Yates). The Tigers got impact players on the defensive and (Yates and Johnny Mitchell) offensive lines (Alcander Jackson) and a big-time running back (Cecil Collins).
2. Tennessee (DB Dwayne Goodrich).
3. Florida (DE Derrick Chambers).
4. South Carolina (WR Jermale Kelly).
5. Georgia (RB Patrick Pass).
6. Arkansas (LB J.J. Jones).
7. Auburn (OL Colin Sears).
8. Alabama (DL Michael Myers).
9. Ole Miss (TE Rufus French).
10. Kentucky (QB Tim Couch).
11. Vanderbilt (OL Michael Saltsman).
12. Mississippi State (WR James Jones).

starters. Wright might have the tougher job because the Gamecocks ask more of their quarterback than the Razorbacks.

Most overrated player: Auburn WR Willie Gosha. Granted, Gosha made 58 catches last season—but none went for touchdowns. Gosha is a solid player and will have good stats again. But he definitely is not an All-American caliber player.

Most underrated player: Tennessee CB Raymond Austin. He doesn't make All-SEC teams, but he makes plays. This fall, he'll make the difficult transition from safety to corner, but Vols coaches have confidence in him.

Best coach: Steve Spurrier. Four SEC East titles in a row and three consecutive conference championships. It's no contest.

Best staff: Defensive coordinator Bill "Brother" Oliver's well-paid move from Alabama to Auburn's tips the scales to Terry Bowden's Tigers. But give Spurrier credit for bringing in defensive coordinator Bob Stoops, who worked wonders at Kansas State.

Coach on the hot seat: Bill Curry bought time by signing quarterback Tim Couch, probably the most important recruit ever produced in the Bluegrass. But Curry must produce on the field. He has yet to deliver a winning mark in six seasons.

Best bets: Peyton Manning and Danny Wuerffel both will finish in the top five in Heisman voting. ... Tim Couch will be Kentucky's quarterback by October 1, if not September 1. ... LSU will go unbeaten in Tiger Stadium. ... Alabama will change starting quarterbacks before the year's finished. ... Tennessee's Jeff Hall will kick a 60-yard field goal. ... Jackie Sherrill will



Mississippi State struggled last season, but it wasn't the fault of linebacker Dwayne Curry.

accuse LSU punter Chad Kessler of inflating his footballs with helium.

Odds and ends: Joe Lee Dunn is doing a pretty good Lynn Amedee impersonation. Dunn will be coordinating Mississippi State's defense this year. Last year, it was Arkansas. The year before that it was Ole Miss. Coincidentally, Amedee is back in business at Mississippi State, coordinating Jackie Sherrill's offense. He was only out of the league one year after his '94 stint at LSU. ... At Kentucky, Bill Curry closed practice to the media during the spring and will keep the ban in place through the opener with Louisville. Groundskeeping at Commonwealth Stadium gave him a convenient excuse to cancel the spring game. Are the Wildcats doing some serious innovating on offense, or do they want to take the pressure off Tim Couch's arrival for two-a-days? ... Tennessee lost offensive line coach Steve Marshall to UCLA in the offseason. Guess who visits Knoxville on September 7? UCLA. The Vols might have to change some calls. ... David Kelly is considered a top-notch recruiter among SEC assistants. When the Ray Goff purge came at Georgia, LSU was happy to snag Kelly. ... Tennessee is increasing the capacity of Neyland Stadium to 102,485. It's the second-largest on-campus facility in the nation, trailing Michigan Stadium by a mere 16 seats. ... Vanderbilt has thrown eight touchdown passes combined the past two seasons. ... Florida is one of only two teams (Florida State is the other) to finish each of the past five seasons ranked in the Top 10 in the final Associated Press poll. ... Georgia's Hines Ward had separate games of more than 100 yards rushing, receiving and passing last season. Ward will concentrate on wide receiver this season. ... Beginning this season, CBS will be the national network provider for SEC football. But the SEC championship game remains on ABC.

—MIKE STRANGE



UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

If you're an opponent, you have to be on the lookout for Florida safety Lawrence Wright.



Iowa tailback Sedrick Shaw is bidding for his third consecutive 1,000-yard season.

1. IOWA

Offensive strengths: Career rushing leader Sedrick Shaw shouldn't have much trouble becoming just the seventh back in league history to have three consecutive 1,000-yard seasons. Tavian Banks joins Shaw to give Iowa a formidable tailback duo.

Offensive weaknesses: Hayden Fry's tight ends always have stood at the line, making them easy to spot. This year, unless a replacement emerges for the departed Scott Slutzker, Fry may want his tight ends in a three-point stance, so the dropoff in production from last season isn't so obvious. Three linemen must be replaced.

Defensive strengths: Cornerback Plez Atkins, who paced the Big Ten with six interceptions, headlines a veteran secondary. Iowa's last three foes combined for only 71 yards rushing, which could be a preview of things to come given the return of star sophomore tackle Jared DeVries. End Bill Ennis-Inge provides leadership, and linebacker Vernon Rollins is a rising star.

Defensive weaknesses: Experience usually is a blessing, but the return of last year's starting secondary may not be a blessing given the way it was singed last season. Atkins and fellow cornerback Tom Knight were picked on in two of the Hawkeyes' four league losses.

Special teams: Tim Dwight, a fine receiver, is the league's premier return threat, and only a shortage of four punts kept Nick Gallery and his 45.3-yard average from ranking second in the nation. With talent like that, luck isn't necessary, but Iowa found it in walk-on Zach Bromert, who was inserted in the third game and kicked 35 extra points and was 7-of-8 on field-goal attempts.

Key to success: Each of Iowa's three Rose Bowl trips under Fry has come with an All-Big Ten quarterback leading the way. No wonder Fry says, "Any time you have a quality veteran returning at quarterback, you feel real good." That puts the pressure on Matt Sherman, who is 10-4 in 1½ seasons as a starter. Until the Sun Bowl, he

BIG TEN

Conference Rank: 3

By BRUCE HOOLEY

PREDICTIONS

1. IOWA
2. PENN STATE
3. OHIO STATE
4. MICHIGAN
5. NORTHWESTERN
6. MICHIGAN STATE
7. PURDUE
8. WISCONSIN
9. INDIANA
10. ILLINOIS
11. MINNESOTA

hadn't played well in a big game. Iowa needs that on a consistent basis if it is to claim another ticket to Pasadena.

Outlook: Experience, momentum from a three-game winning streak to end the 1995 season and a friendly 1996 schedule are in the Hawkeyes' corner. Iowa had the same elements in place in 1990 and came from nowhere to claim the Rose Bowl berth. Consider that season a harbinger.

HAWKEYES DATA

Coach: Hayden Fry (124-73-6, 17 years; 213-162-10 overall, 34 years).

1995 record: 8-4 (beat Washington in Sun Bowl). Big Ten: 4-4/6th.

Key losses: George Bennett, DE; Lloyd Bickham, DT; Bobby Diaco, LB; Chris Jackson, SS; Aaron Kooiker, OT; Matt Purdy, G; Scott Slutzker, TE; Casey Wiegmann, C.
Starters returning: **Offense (6):** Tim Dwight, WR, 5-9/190, Jr.; Mike Goff, G, 6-6/290, Jr.; Demo Odems, WR, 5-10/180, Sr.; Sedrick Shaw, TB, 6-1/195, Sr.; Matt Sherman, QB, 6-3/207, Jr.; Ross Verba, T, 6-4/285, Sr. **Defense (7):** Plez Atkins, CB, 6-0/180, Jr.; Jared DeVries, T, 6-4/260, Soph.; Bill Ennis-Inge, E, 6-5/245, Sr.; Tom Knight, CB, 5-11/190, Sr.; Jon LaFleur, T, 6-3/275, Jr.; Damien Robinson, FS, 6-2/205, Sr.; Vernon Rollins, LB, 6-3/235, Soph. **Kickers (2):** Nick Gallery, P, 6-4/239, Sr.; Brion Hurley, K, 6-4/220, Sr.

Other key returnees: Tavian Banks, TB, Jr.; Zach Bromert, K, Soph.; Michael Burger, FB, Soph.; Ricchard Carter, WR, Jr.; Brett Chambers, DE, Sr.; Billy Coats, CB, Sr.; Kerry Cooks, SS, Jr.; Ryan Driscoll, QB, Sr.; Rodney Filer, FB, Jr.; Ed Gibson, CB, Jr.; Matt Hughes, LB, Soph.; Aron Klein, NG, Soph.; Chris Knipper, TE, Soph.; Jeremy McKinney, OT, Jr.; Mark Mitchell, LB, Sr.; Jon Ortleib, DT, Sr.; Bill Reardon, C, Sr.; Matt Reischl, G, Soph.; Eric Thigpen, FS, Soph.

Top newcomers: Matt Bowen, SS, Fr. (RS); Raj Clark, LB, Fr. (RS); Zeron Flemister, TE, Fr. (RS); Ryan Loftin, DE, Fr. (RS); Shalor Pryor, G, Fr. (RS); Keith Rigtrup, G, Jr. (JC); Ed Saidat, DT, Fr. (RS); Nick Thummel, DL, Jr. (JC).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Shaw (316 att., 1,477 yds., 15 TD); **Passing:** Sherman (295 att., 170 comp., 15 INT, 14 TD, 2,546 yds.); **Receiving:** Dwight (46 rec., 816 yds., 9 TD); **Tackles:** Rollins (100); **Sacks:** Ennis-Inge, DeVries (12). Site: Iowa City, Iowa. Stadium: Kinnick (70,397).

Last league title won: 1990 (tie).

SCHEDULE

Sept. 7—Arizona	Oct. 26—Ohio State
Sept. 14—Iowa State	Nov. 2—at Illinois
Sept. 21—at Tulsa	Nov. 9—Northwestern
Oct. 5—Michigan State	Nov. 16—Wisconsin
Oct. 12—at Indiana	Nov. 23—at Minnesota
Oct. 19—at Penn State	

2. PENN STATE

Offensive strengths: Quarterback Wally Richardson and tailback Curtis Enis will have the spotlight, primarily because they're the only guys who know their way to the stage. Richardson could be illegal if he duplicates his four-touchdown success from the Outback Bowl with any regularity. That won't be easy with wide receiver Freddie Scott having bypassed his senior season for the NFL. Departures at tailback will be a blessing because no upperclassmen are around to take time away from Enis, a Ki-Jana Carter in waiting. Keith Olsommer is the Big Ten's premier tight end.

Offensive weaknesses: If All-American guard Jeff Hartings was the only loss up front, it would be painful enough. Multiply his departure times four, though, because that's how many starters the Lions lost on the line. Good thing Richardson is mobile because he'll likely need to be nimble to survive. Who's going to stretch defenses with Scott and Bobby Engram gone? Maybe redshirt freshman Corey Jones, a highly touted recruit in '95.

Defensive strengths: Penn State ranked second against the run in the league last year, and will only get better with the return of nine starters, including linebacker Gerald Filardi. Redshirt sophomore Floyd Wedderburn is ready for his first campaign after suffering a season-ending knee injury in the preseason last fall and missing 1994 as a Prop 48. At 6-5, 328 pounds, he won't be easy to avoid. Neither will senior tackle Brandon Noble.

Defensive weaknesses: Why did cornerback Mark Tate finish second in the Big Ten with 15 passes broken up last season? Because foes got tired of being denied by two-time all-conference corner Brian Miller, who has led the Big Ten in passes broken up in each of the past two seasons. Miller hasn't gotten any worse, but has Tate improved? Safety Kim Herring definitely is a stud.



Senior cornerback Brian Miller is a two-time all-conference selection for the Nittany Lions.

Special teams: Kicker Brett Conway, who was 7-of-10 from 40-plus yards in '95, gives Penn State the security of a proven late-game rescuer, and there is no shortage of dangerous punt- and kickoff-return talent. Darrell Kania returns after averaging 37.4 yards per punt.

Key to success: If Joe Paterno can locate an offensive line, he might also find his way to the Rose Bowl. Penn State has everything else in place to make a title run, but it can't make one if Richardson is forced to run for his life.

Outlook: Penn State's defense has been hampered by injuries each of the past two seasons. The benefit from that is numerous young players have gained experience that should serve them well this season. It better, because if the Lions start slowly, they'll be out of contention early. That's what happened last year, when they opened with losses against Wisconsin and Ohio State. This year, Penn State starts league play on the road against those opponents.

MITTANY LIONS DATA

Coach: Joe Paterno (278-72-3, 30 years).

1995 record: 9-3 (beat Auburn in Outback Bowl). Big Ten: 5-3/T3rd.

Key losses: Mike Archie, TB; Todd Atkins, DE; Keith Conlin, OT; Bobby Ingram, WR; Jeff Hartings, G; Andre Johnson, OT; Terry Killens, DE/OLB; Brian Milne, FB; Stephen Pitts, TB; Marco Rivera, G; Freddie Scott, WR (declared for NFL draft); Jon Witman, FB.

Starters returning: **Offense** (4): Curtis Enis, TB, 6-1/231, Soph.; Keith Olsommer, TE, 6-4/248, Sr.; Wally Richardson, QB, 6-4/222, Sr.; Barry Tielisch, C, 6-2/290, Sr. **Defense** (9): Aaron Collins, OLB, 6-0/233, Jr.; Gerald Filardi, ILB, 6-0/236, Sr.; Kim Herring, S, 6-0/196, Sr.; Brian Miller, CB, 5-9/186, Sr.; Jim Nelson, OLB, 6-2/226, Jr.; Brandon Noble, T, 6-2/270, Sr.; Chuck Penzenik, S, 5-10/180, Sr.; Brad Scioli, T, 6-3/261, Jr.; Mark Tate, CB, 6-0/177, Sr. **Kickers** (2): Brett Conway, K, 6-2/188, Sr.; Darrell Kania, P, 6-0/180, Sr.

Other key returnees: Bill Anderson, G, Sr.; Cunchio Brown, TE, Soph.; Chris Campbell, WR, Sr.; Anthony Cleary, DE, Soph.; Ahmad Collins, OLB, Jr. (RS/academics); Jason Collins, S, Sr.; Chris Eberly, TB, Soph.; Jason Henderson, OT, Sr.; Clint Holes, S, Sr.; Joe Jurevicius, WR, Jr.; Peter Marczyk, OT, Sr.; Joe Nastasi, WR, Soph.; Phil Ostrowski, G, Jr.; Clint Seace, ILB, Soph.; Jason Sload, FB, Jr.

Top newcomers: Courtney Brown, LB/DE, Fr.; Rashard Casey, QB, Fr.; Joe Dawkins, RB, Fr.; Aaron Harris, FB, Fr. (RS); Corey Jones, WR, Fr. (RS); Titicus Pettigrew, WR, Fr.; Brandon Short, LB, Fr. (RS/foot); Floyd Wedderburn, DT, Soph. (RS/knee).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Enis (113 att., 683 yds., 4 TD); **Passing:** Richardson (335 att., 193 comp., 6 INT, 18 TD, 2,198 yds.); **Receiving:** Olsommer (23 rec., 197 yds., 2 TD); **Tackles:** Filardi (112); **Sacks:** Noble (4).

Site: University Park, Pa. **Stadium:** Beaver (93,967).

Last league title won: 1994.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 25—USC (Kickoff Classic)	Oct. 12—Purdue
Sept. 7—Louisville	Oct. 19—Iowa
Sept. 14—Northern Illinois	Oct. 26—at Indiana
Sept. 21—at Temple	Nov. 2—Northwestern
Sept. 28—at Wisconsin	Nov. 16—at Michigan
Oct. 5—at Ohio State	Nov. 23—Michigan State

3. OHIO STATE

Offensive strengths: The subject that kept John Cooper up nights in the fall of 1994 now has him sleeping like a baby. Two years ago, he had one returning starter up front. Now he has four back, with three beginning their third year as starters. None pleases Cooper more than All-American tackle Orlando Pace, who toyed with leaving school after his sophomore year but came back to seek a second Lombardi Award and OSU's first Rose Bowl berth since the 1984 season. Guard LeShun Daniels also bears watching.



Juan Porter is at the center of a solid Ohio State line; the unit should be one of the nation's best.

Offensive weaknesses: Losing Heisman Trophy winner Eddie George could cause lots of headaches, but the Buckeyes are confident junior Pepe Pearson or one of two talented true freshmen—Nick Goings and Michael Wiley—will step forward. The biggest worry is finding a replacement for Biletnikoff Award winner Terry Glenn at flanker. Without his speed, OSU's deep passing game could be a toothless threat.

Defensive strengths: A change in coordinators from eight-year veteran Bill Young to 20-year assistant Fred Pagac, the last link to the Woody Hayes regime, will bring more blitzes. Depth in the secondary is the reason Pagac, who inherits 10 returning starters, feels comfortable taking risks. Shawn Springs is the kind of cornerback opponents try to avoid, and sophomore Antoine Winfield is the kind of monster talent who could unseat one of OSU's three other returning starters in the secondary. Mike Vrabel and Matt Finkes may be the top end tandem in the nation.

Defensive weaknesses: Faster than you can say "Biakabutuka," Michigan exposed a season-long Ohio State weakness by running wild en route to ruining Ohio State's Rose Bowl hopes. The Buckeyes haven't gotten appreciably bigger up front, so it's questionable whether they've gotten better. **Special teams:** Punter Brent Bartholomew's introduction to cold weather and high winds gave him considerable trouble. Kicker Josh Jackson is reliable inside 40 yards, but shaky beyond that. So is long-range kicker Mike Malfatt. That's why Cooper spent a third kicking scholarship on Dan Stultz, the best kicking prospect Ohio has produced in a decade.

Key to success: Former backup quarterback Stanley Jackson needs to shed the happy feet that have caused him to abandon the game plan in the past. Maybe that problem will vanish now that Jackson will be afforded the blocking of a first-string offensive line. But if Jackson, who may lose his job to JC transfer Mark Garcia, scrambles too much, so will Ohio State.

Outlook: Teams with outstanding rushing offenses and a solid defense historically

have made strong bids for the Big Ten championship. OSU should have both elements in 1996. But unless Cooper reverses another piece of history—his 1-6-1 record against Michigan while coaching Ohio State—the Buckeyes won't be headed west for the holidays.

BUCKEYES DATA

Coach: John Cooper (65-28-4, 8 years; 147-68-6 overall, 20 years).

1995 record: 11-2 (lost to Tennessee in Citrus Bowl). Big Ten: 7-1/2nd.

Key losses: Matt Bonhaus, DT; Rickey Dudley, TE; Eddie George, TB; Terry Glenn, FL (declared for NFL draft); Bobby Hoving, QB; Jamie Sumner, G.

Starters returning: **Offense** (6): LeShun Daniels, G, 6-2/285, Sr.; Eric Gohlstein, T, 6-3/300, Jr.; Orlando Pace, T, 6-6/320, Jr.; Juan Porter, C, 6-4/290, Sr.; Nicky Sualua, FB, 5-11/250, Jr.; Buster Tillman, SE, 6-1/188, Sr. **Defense** (10): Greg Bellisari, MLB, 6-1/240, Sr.; Luke Fickell, NG, 6-4/265, Sr.; Matt Finkes, E, 6-2/260, Sr.; Anthony Gwinn, FS, 6-0/200, Sr.; Ty Howard, CB, 5-9/181, Sr.; Kevin Johnson, OLB, 6-2/220, Sr.; Rob Kelly, SS, 6-2/200, Sr.; Ryan Miller, OLB, 6-2/220, Sr.; Shawn Springs, CB, 6-0/185, Jr.; Mike Vrabel, E, 6-4/260, Sr. **Kickers** (2): Brent Bartholomew, P, 6-2/200, Soph.; Josh Jackson, K, 5-11/173, Sr.

Other key returnees: Che' Bryant, SS, Soph.; John Day, DE, Jr.; Winfield Garnett, DT, Jr.; Jermon Jackson, TB, Jr.; Stanley Jackson, QB, Jr.; D.J. Jones, TE, Sr.; Dee Miller, WR, Soph.; Mike Malfatt, K, Jr.; Damon Moore, FS, Soph.; Pepe Pearson, TB, Jr.; Dimitrios Stanley, WR, Sr.; Jeff Wilson, DE, Soph.; Antoine Winfield, CB, Soph.

Top newcomers: David Boston, WR, Fr.; Na'il Diggs, LB, Fr.; Drew Elford, G, Fr. (RS); Mark Garcia, QB, Jr. (JC); Nick Goings, TB, Fr.; Andy Katzenmoyer, LB, Fr.; Jefferson Kelly, OL, Fr.; Rob Murphy, G, Fr. (RS); Jimmy Redmond, WR, Fr. (RS); Dan Stultz, K, Fr.; Michael Wiley, TB, Fr.

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Pearson (83 att., 385 yds., 3 TD); **Passing:** Jackson (25 att., 16 comp., 1 INT, 2 TD, 202 yds.); **Receiving:** Tillman (30 rec., 538 yds., 1 TD); **Tackles:** Bellisari (98); **Sacks:** Vrabel (13).

Site: Columbus, Ohio. **Stadium:** Ohio (95,000).

Last league title won: 1993 (tie).

SCHEDULE

Sept. 7—Rice	Oct. 26—at Iowa
Sept. 21—Pittsburgh	Nov. 2—Minnesota
Sept. 28—at Notre Dame	Nov. 9—at Illinois
Oct. 5—Penn State	Nov. 16—at Indiana
Oct. 12—Wisconsin	Nov. 23—Michigan
Oct. 19—at Purdue	

4. MICHIGAN

Offensive strengths: Don't be fooled by Tim Biakabutuka's early departure for the NFL. Michigan, like always, is loaded at running back. Chris Howard or Clarence Williams will prove a worthy successor to Biakabutuka, just like he was to Tyrone Wheatley, like he was to Ricky Powers, like he was to Jon Vaughn ... get the picture? Center Rod Payne leads what should be a solid line.

Offensive weakness: Amani Toomer and Mercury Hayes gave the Wolverines great performance, great leadership and great security as bookend receivers the past four seasons. Now their departure gives Lloyd Carr a great big headache. Couple their exit with the loss of tight end Jay Riemersma, and Michigan returns only 5 percent of its receptions from last year. That's why a converted defensive back, Kevin Bryant, is likely to start at receiver.

Defensive strengths: Sophomore Charles Woodson already is one of the best cornerbacks in the Big Ten and in the country. He and strong safety Clarence Thompson are, in Carr's opinion, "two of the finest defensive backs we've had at Michigan since I've been here." Carr's been in Ann Arbor since 1980, so that's a mouthful. End Glen Steele is one of the Big Ten's top pass rushers.

PRESEASON ALL-BIG TEN TEAM

PLAYERS OF THE YEAR

OFFENSE



SEDRICK SHAW
TB, Iowa

DEFENSE



MIKE VRABEL
E, Ohio State

NEWCOMERS OF THE YEAR

OFFENSE: Corey Jones, WR, Penn State
DEFENSE: Floyd Wedderburn, T, Penn State

FIRST TEAM

OFFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
WR	D'WAYNE BATES, Northwestern	6-2/208	Jr.
WR	RYAN THELWELL, Minnesota	6-2/180	Jr.
TE	KEITH OLSOMMER, Penn State	6-4/248	Sr.
T	ORLANDO PACE, Ohio State	6-6/320	Jr.
T	JERRY WUNSCH, Wisconsin	6-6/315	Sr.
G	JAMIE VANDERVELDT, Wisconsin	6-5/305	Sr.
G	LESHUN DANIELS, Ohio State	6-2/285	Sr.
C	ROD PAYNE, Michigan	6-4/285	Sr.
QB	WALLY RICHARDSON, Penn State	6-4/222	Sr.
RB	SEDRICK SHAW, Iowa	6-1/195	Sr.
RB	DARNELL AUTRY, Northwestern	5-11/209	Jr.

DEFENSE

E	TAREK SALEH, Wisconsin	6-3/236	Sr.
T	FLOYD WEDDERBURN, Penn State	6-5/328	Soph.
T	WILLIAM CARR, Michigan	6-0/269	Sr.
E	MIKE VRABEL, Ohio State	6-4/255	Sr.
LB	PAT FITZGERALD, Northwestern	6-2/233	Sr.
LB	JARRETT IRONS, Michigan	6-1/231	Sr.
LB	CHIKI OKEAFOR, Purdue	6-5/237	Jr.
CB	SHAWN SPRINGS, Ohio State	6-0/185	Jr.
CB	BRIAN MILLER, Penn State	5-9/186	Sr.
S	KIM HERRING, Penn State	6-0/196	Sr.
S	ERIC COLLIER, Northwestern	6-1/217	Sr.

SPECIALISTS

K	REMY HAMILTON, Michigan	6-0/193	Sr.
P	NICK GALLERY, Iowa	6-4/239	Sr.
KR	DERRICK MASON, Michigan State	5-11/190	Sr.

SECOND TEAM

OFFENSE

WR	TONY SIMMONS, Wisconsin	6-2/201	Jr.
WR	TIM DWIGHT, Iowa	5-9/190	Jr.
TE	DARREN DREXLER, Northwestern	6-6/258	Sr.
T	BRIAN KARDOS, Northwestern	6-4/293	Sr.
T	FLOZELL ADAMS, Michigan State	6-7/335	Jr.
G	EMMETT ZITELLI, Purdue	6-3/295	Sr.
G	ZACH ADAMI, Michigan	6-5/279	Jr.
C	JUAN PORTER, Ohio State	6-4/285	Sr.
QB	MATT SHERMAN, Iowa	6-3/207	Jr.
RB	ALEX SMITH, Indiana	6-0/205	Jr.
RB	CURTIS ENIS, Penn State	6-1/231	Soph.

DEFENSE

E	MATT FINKES, Ohio State	6-2/258	Sr.
T	JARED DEVRIES, Iowa	6-4/260	Soph.
NT	LUKE FICKELL, Ohio State	6-4/260	Sr.
E	NATHAN DAVIS, Indiana	6-5/285	Sr.
LB	REGGIE GARNETT, Michigan St.	6-1/228	Sr.
LB	GREG BELLISARI, Ohio State	6-1/240	Sr.
LB	PETE MONTY, Wisconsin	6-2/241	Sr.
CB	DERRICK WINSTON, Purdue	6-0/172	Sr.
CB	CHARLES WOODSON, Michigan	6-1/192	Soph.
S	AARON WARNECKE, Indiana	6-1/200	Jr.
S	MARVIN WRIGHT, Michigan State	6-1/218	Sr.

SPECIALISTS

K	BRETT CONWAY, Penn State	6-2/188	Sr.
P	ALAN SUTKOWSKI, Indiana	6-1/185	Jr.
KR	BRIAN MUSSO, Northwestern	6-1/185	Sr.

Defensive weaknesses: Michigan is 6-1-1 against Ohio State since 1988 because it stops the Buckeyes on the ground. Counting on that again is risky, given the loss of all-conference linemen Trent Zenkewicz and Jason Horn. But nose tackle William Carr is a stout run-stuffer, and inside linebacker Jarrett Irons controls the middle.

Special teams: Three of Michigan's four losses last year were attributable to special teams' failings, so improvement is paramount if it hopes for a Big Ten title. Remy Hamilton, who hit 19-of-27 field-goal attempts, is solid, but elsewhere there are questions given the loss of Toomer and Hayes from the return game and the reliance on true freshman Cory Sargent to punt.

Key to success: Sophomore Scott Dreisbach supposedly is healthy after missing the last eight games of 1995 with a ligament injury in his right thumb. Dreisbach had the Wolverines off to a 4-0 start, after which they were 5-4 under Brian Griese. That underscores how important Dreisbach is to Michigan.

Outlook: A considerable amount of swagger has been lost in Ann Arbor since Bo Schembechler's retirement, and Gary Moeller's embarrassing departure didn't make things better. Carr did an admirable job preventing a complete collapse last year, given the circumstances in which he took over and the subsequent loss of his starting quarterback. He may be the man to get Michigan back atop the Big Ten, but the schedule is just too tough this year.

WOLVERINES DATA

Coach: Lloyd Carr (9-4, 1 year).

1995 record: 9-4 (lost to Texas A&M in Alamo Bowl). Big Ten: 5-3/T3rd.

Key losses: Tim Biakabutuka, TB (declared for NFL draft); Mercury Hayes, WR; Jason Horn, DT; Joe Marinaro, G; Jay Riemersma, TE; Jon Runyan, OT (declared for NFL draft); Amani Toomer, WR; Trent Zenkewicz, DE.

Starters returning: Offense (5): Zach Adami, G, 6-5/279, Jr.; Chris Floyd, FB, 6-1/222, Jr.; Brian Griese, QB, 6-3/209, Jr.; Jon Jansen, T, 6-7/277, Sr.; Rod Payne, C, 6-4/285, Sr.

Defense (9): David Bowens, ILB, 6-3/228, Soph.; William Carr, NT, 6-0/269, Sr.; Woodrow Hankins, CB, 5-9/197, Sr.; Jarrett Irons, ILB, 6-1/231, Sr.; Glen Steele, E, 6-5/271, Sr.; Sam Sword, ILB, 6-2/242, Soph.; Clarence Thompson, SS, 6-1/198, Sr.; Chuck Winters, FS, 6-0/200, Sr.; Charles Woodson, CB, 6-1/192, Soph.

Kickers (1): Remy Hamilton, K, 6-0/193, Sr. **Other key returnees:** Brent Blackwell, DE/OLB, Soph.; Mark Campbell, TE, Soph.; Clint Copenhaver, LB, Soph.; Damon Denson, G, Sr.; Scott Dreisbach, QB, Soph.; Juacuin Feazell, DE, Jr.; Thomas Guynes, OT, Sr.; Chris Howard, TB, Jr.; Ben Huff, DT, Jr.; Steve King, SS, Sr.; Joe Ries, C/G, Jr.; Rasheed Simmons, DE, Soph.; Tai Streets, WR, Soph.; Rob Swett, ILB, Sr.; Jerame Tuman, TE, Soph.; Andre Weathers, CB, Soph.; Clarence Williams, TB, Soph.

Top newcomers: Tom Brady, QB, Fr. (RS); Kevin Bryant, WR (moved from DB), Fr. (RS); J.R. Ford, TB, Fr. (RS); Tommy Hendricks, DB, Fr.; Pat Kratus, DE, Fr. (RS); Rob Renes, NT, Fr. (RS); Cory Sargent, P, Fr.; Russell Shaw, WR, Jr. (JC); Aaron Shea, FB, Fr. (RS); Josh Williams, DT, Fr. (RS); Chris Ziemann, DL, Fr. (RS).

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Williams (60 att., 227 yds., 2 TD); Passing: Griese (215 att., 118 comp., 9 INT, 11 TD, 1,395 yds.); Receiving: Howard (14 rec., 91 yds., 2 TD); Tackles: Irons (116); Sacks: Steele (8).

Site: Ann Arbor, Mich. **Stadium:** Michigan (102,501).

Last league title won: 1992.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—Illinois	Oct. 26—at Minnesota
Sept. 14—at Colorado	Nov. 2—Michigan State
Sept. 21—Boston College	Nov. 9—at Purdue
Sept. 28—UCLA	Nov. 16—Penn State
Oct. 5—at Northwestern	Nov. 23—at Ohio State
Oct. 19—Indiana	

5. NORTHWESTERN

Offensive strengths: Darnell Autry was

one of only two backs in the nation to top 100 yards rushing in every game last season. With the blocking of three returning line starters—including standout tackle Brian Kardos and guard Justin Chabot—and the almost certain improvement of Autry, a 2,000-yard season is possible. Quarterback Steve Schnur knows what it takes not to lose. He's made better by D'Wayne Bates, a big target who may be the Big Ten's best receiver, and tight end Darren Drexler.

Offensive weaknesses: Rob Johnson started every game of his career at center, and Ryan Padgett was a three-year starter at guard. Their departure leaves a potential weakness in the interior unless Nathan Strikwerda (center) and Kevin Peterson (guard) come through. Both are seniors, but both also are replacing first-team All-Big Ten performers.

Defensive strengths: Northwestern's success against the run last season ran deeper than inside linebacker Pat Fitzgerald. Someone had to occupy blockers so Fitzgerald could make tackles, and no one was better at it than tackle Matt Rice. He and Ray Robey make the Wildcats very solid inside, and Bobby Russ' return from an injury redshirt season (knee) only adds depth.

Defensive weaknesses: Outstanding cornerback play allowed the Wildcats to blitz without fear in 1995, but that luxury left with the departure of Rodney Ray and Chris Martin. All-conference nickel back Hudhaifa Ismaeli takes over one of those spots after moving from safety. If he's as effective out wide as he was on the blitz, Northwestern's worries will be minimized. He'll get help



Strong safety Eric Collier is the lone returning starter in Northwestern's secondary.

from strong safety Eric Collier.

Special teams: It didn't seem like it at the time, but kicker Sam Valenzisi's season-ending injury late last year had a silver lining. It allowed freshman Brian Gowins to gain valuable experience that he will need now that the job is his. Punter Paul Burton has All-American ability, and Brian Musso is a solid punt returner. Ismaeli's success in the Rose Bowl proves kickoff returns won't be a problem, either.

Key to success: Northwestern didn't beat itself last season, ranking third in the nation in turnover margin. The Wildcats also paced the nation in scoring defense. Gary Barnett needs a repeat of those feats to secure a big-time bowl. Compounding matters is the fact Northwestern won't sneak up on anybody.

Outlook: If any other conference member had this much talent back from a league championship team, it would be an overwhelming favorite to repeat. The fact that Northwestern isn't picked to finish first is a testament to some lingering belief that last year was a once-in-a-lifetime achievement. There's also the nasty matter of road games at Penn State and Iowa, both of which came to Evanston a season ago.

WILDCATS DATA

Coach: Gary Barnett (18-25-1, 4 years).

1995 record: 10-2 (lost to USC in Rose Bowl). Big Ten: 8-0/1st.

Key losses: William Bennett, FS; Larry Curry, DT; Rob Johnson, C; Chris Martin, CB; Ryan Padgett, G; Rodney Ray, CB; Geoff Shein, ILB; Danny Sutter, ILB; Sam Valenzisi, K; Mike Warren, DE.

Starters returning: **Offense (9):** Darnell Autry, RB, 5-11/209, Jr.; D'Wayne Bates, WR, 6-2/208, Jr.; Dave Beazley, WR, 5-10/183, Sr.; Justin Chabot, G, 6-6/292, Sr.; Darren Drexler, TE, 6-6/258, Sr.; Matt Hartl, FB, 6-2/233, Jr.; Paul Janus, T, 6-5/287, Sr.; Brian Kardos, T, 6-4/298, Sr.; Steve Schnur, QB, 6-0/192, Sr. **Defense (4):** Eric Collier, SS, 6-1/217, Sr.; Casey Dailey, E, 6-4/249, Sr.; Pat Fitzgerald, ILB, 6-2/233, Sr.; Matt Rice, T, 6-3/270, Sr. **Kickers (1):** Paul Burton, P, 5-11/191, Sr. **Other key returnees:** Josh Barnes, CB, Jr.; Kevin Buck, OLB, Soph.; Barry Gardner, ILB, Jr.; Brian Gowins, K, Jr.; Hudhaifa Ismaeli, CB/KR (moved from S), Sr.; Keith Lozowski, DE, Sr.; Brian Musso, WR/PR, Sr.; Mike Nelson, FS, Jr.; Kevin Peterson, G, Sr.; Joe Reiff, DT, Sr.; Ray Robey, DT, Sr.; Bobby Russ, DT, Jr. (RS/knee); Tim Scharf, ILB, Sr.; Thor Schmidt,

DE, Jr.; Nathan Strikwerda, C, Sr.; Joel Stuart, TE, Jr.; Jason Wendland, OT, Sr.; Fred Wilkerson, CB, Jr.

Top newcomers: Tyrone Gooch, RB, Fr. (RS); Jack Hamedy, OL, Fr.; Anawn Jones, LB, Fr.; Hasani Steele, WR, Fr. (RS).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Autry (355 att., 1,675 yds., 14 TD); **Passing:** Schnur (218 att., 118 comp., 5 INT, 9 TD, 1,456 yds.); **Receiving:** Bates (42 rec., 744 yds., 5 TD); **Tackles:** Fitzgerald (130); **Sacks:** Dailey, Rice (6). **Site:** Evanston, Ill. **Stadium:** Dyche (49,256).

Last league title won: 1995.

SCHEDULE

Sept. 7—at Wake Forest	Oct. 19—at Wisconsin
Sept. 14—at Duke	Oct. 26—Illinois
Sept. 21—Ohio	Nov. 2—at Penn State
Sept. 28—at Indiana	Nov. 9—at Iowa
Oct. 5—Michigan	Nov. 16—Purdue
Oct. 12—Minnesota	

6. MICHIGAN STATE

Offensive strengths: Tailback Marc Renaud could put up huge numbers if he can avoid the injuries that plagued him throughout 1995. Even with an assortment of ankle and shoulder ailments, he still eclipsed 1,000 yards rushing. Freshman running back Sedrick Irvin is highly touted. Derrick Mason should be the next in a long line of outstanding Spartans receivers. Nigea Carter pairs with Mason to form a deadly duo, and tight end Josh Keur is a load.

Offensive weaknesses: Notre Dame transfer Gus Ornstein was supposed to take over for Tony Banks at quarterback, but Ornstein's disappointing spring gave Todd Schultz the edge. Schultz was 2-1 as a starter last year, but didn't show the kind of arm MSU will need if it's to make a run at the first division. The line lacks depth, although tackle Flozell Adams is a stud.

Defensive strengths: It's one thing to have talent across the board at linebacker; it's another to have talented backups at every linebacking position. Michigan State, much to coach Nick Saban's delight, has both. The headliner in the six-deep rotation is senior middle linebacker Reggie Garnett, who has started since his freshman season.

Defensive weaknesses: MSU ranked last in the Big Ten against the run last season because of a porous line and shoddy tackling in the secondary. Three foes ran for 200 or more yards, and two more went for 175 or more. The Spartans won only one of those games, so it's obvious where the improvement must come.

Special teams: Mason may be the nation's premier return man. He led the Big Ten in kickoff returns en route to netting 947 yards and two returns for touchdowns. He'll also return punts in hopes of getting the Spartans some quick scores. They'll need all they can get if kicker Chris Gardner suffers from a second straight season without a field goal of 40 yards. Pacific transfer Roger Fleenor will punt.

Key to success: It starts with defense, which the Spartans played poorly last season. A quarterback must emerge, as well as a line to protect him and block for Renaud. Michigan State's players responded well to the tighter reins imposed by Saban. If they stick with their coach's plan, prosperity is bound to follow.

Outlook: Saban has the Spartans on the road back to the Rose Bowl, but the highway is dotted with potholes. Milking

THE PRESSURE'S ON

Buckeyes hope Stan's the man at quarterback

They were not the words Stanley Jackson wanted to hear, only the ones he needed to hear.

About the time three-year starting quarterback Bobby Hoying had exhausted his eligibility last season, Jackson expected Ohio State's coaches to express full confidence in his ability to pick up where Hoying left off as the author of almost every passing mark in the Buckeyes' record book. Instead, he



Jackson

got this: "If we thought you could do the job, we wouldn't recruit another quarterback ... but we don't, so we will."

"That told me I needed to step up and show what I

could do," says Jackson, a fourth-year junior who always has made coaches salivate with his athleticism, even as he made them swallow hard over his inconsistency. "What they said didn't hurt my feelings. I realize, this is a sport but also a business. The coaches were just being honest with me, and I appreciated their honesty. It didn't bother me at all."

Hence, Jackson—who has completed 26-of-53 career passes for 307 yards—seized upon his third spring practice, and the unfamiliarity of JC transfer Mark Garcia with the Ohio State offense, and made serious inroads toward claiming Hoying's old job.

That placated more than a few concerns of the OSU coaches, who made filling the quarterback vacancy a higher priority than finding replacements for either Heisman Trophy winner Eddie George or Biletnikoff Award winner Terry Glenn.

"It's the nature of the position," offensive coordinator Joe Hollis says. "Bobby was our most important guy last year, and whoever plays quarterback for us this year will be our most important guy."

That shows a certain reluctance to commit completely to Jackson entering preseason drills, but the praise over his transformation hints loudly that the 6-1, 203-pound Jackson, from Paterson (N.J.) Catholic, will start.

But can he be the same kind of player as Hoying, or close enough to at least give Ohio State a chance to reach the Rose Bowl for the first time since the '84 season?

"I don't like comparing myself to anybody," Jackson says. "People can expect me to get the job done and they can expect the offense to work. I don't think I'll be a step down at all."

—BRUCE HOOLEY

a bowl bid out of the team he inherited was a near miracle. Getting MSU another postseason bid this year also would be impressive, particularly given road games at Nebraska, Iowa, Michigan and Penn State.

SPARTANS DATA

Coach: Nick Saban (6-5-1, 1 year; 15-8-1 overall, 2 years).
1995 record: 6-5-1 (lost to Louisiana State in Independence Bowl). Big Ten: 4-3-1/5th.

Key losses: Yakini Allen, DE; Tony Banks, QB; Matt Beard, C; Bob Denton, OT; Scott Greene, FB; Demetrick Martin, CB; Robert McBride, DT; Muhsin Muhammad, WR; Tony Popovski, G; Chris Salani, P.

Starters returning: Offense (5): Flozell Adams, T, 6-7/335, Jr.; Josh Keur, TE, 6-5/275, Jr.; Derrick Mason, WR/KR, 5-11/190, Sr.; Brian Mosallam, G, 6-2/280, Sr.; Marc Renaud, TB, 5-10/181, Jr. **Defense (8):** Reggie Garnett, MLB, 6-1/228, Sr.; Ray Hill, CB, 6-1/178, Jr.; Sorie Kanu, S, 6-1/190, Soph.; Carl Reaves, OLB, 6-4/227, Sr.; Ike Reese, OLB, 6-3/211, Jr.; Chris Smith, T, 6-3/253, Sr.; Jabbar Threats, E, 6-6/245, Sr.; Marvin Wright, S, 6-1/218, Sr. **Kickers (1):** Chris Gardner, K, 5-9/185, Jr.

Other key returnees: Amp Campbell, CB, Soph.; Nigea Carter, WR, Sr.; Marcus Chapman, TE, Soph.; Brian Echols, CB, Sr.; Dwayne Hawkins, OLB, Soph.; Tim Laws, OLB/DE, Soph.; Courtney Ledyard, LB, Soph.; Dave Mudge, OT, Jr.; Travis Reece, FB, Jr.; Greg Reid, DT, Jr.; Todd Schultz, QB, Jr.; Scott Shaw, G, Jr.; Desmond Thomas, DT, Soph.; Dimitrios Underwood, DE, Soph.

Top newcomers: Bill Burke, QB, Fr. (RS); Paul Edinger, K, Fr.; Roger Fleenor, P, Jr. (transfer/Pacific); Sedrick Irvin, RB, Fr.; Casey Jensen, C, Fr. (RS); Robert Newkirk, DT, Fr. (RS); Gus Ornstein, QB, Soph. (transfer/Notre Dame); Robaire Smith, DE, Fr.

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Renaud (216 att., 1,057 yds., 3 TD); Passing: Schultz (83 att., 52 comp., 6 INT, 2 TD, 570 yds.); Receiving: Mason (53 rec., 787 yds., 4 TD); Tackles: Garnett (111); Sacks: Smith, Threats (5).

Site: East Lansing, Mich. **Stadium:** Spartan (73,000).

Last league title won: 1990 (tie).

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—Purdue	Oct. 19—at Minnesota
Sept. 7—at Nebraska	Oct. 26—Wisconsin
Sept. 21—Louisville	Nov. 2—at Michigan
Sept. 28—Eastern Michigan	Nov. 9—Indiana
Oct. 5—at Iowa	Nov. 23—at Penn State
Oct. 12—Illinois	

7. PURDUE

Offensive strengths: Do-it-all fullback Mike Alstott is gone, but the Boilermakers' rushing offense, which ranked first in the Big Ten, shouldn't vanish. Experience abounds across the line, most notably in guard Emmett Zitelli's 28 career starts. But tackle Mark Fischer is the best of the bunch and should help keep Purdue plowing ahead. Brian Alford leads a developing receiver corps, and keep an eye on mammoth tight end Jon Blackman.

Offensive weaknesses: Purdue lost four times by a combined 16 points last season. Those are the kind of games in which quarterbacks can make a difference, but the Boilermakers haven't had a difference-maker at the position since Jim Everett. Rick Trefzger will start for a third season and try to lead Purdue to its first bowl since 1984. Coach Jim Colletto has a quick hook, though, and won't hesitate to insert Billy Dicken or John Reeves. The tailbacks are unproven.

Defensive strengths: A brief spring suspension could deepen the resolve of linebacker Chike Okefor, who headlines the return of nine starters. That's not good news for foes, since Okefor was pretty tough to handle as a sophomore. Cornerback Derrick Winston and free safety Derrick Brown pace an improving secondary.



ELSA HASCH / THE SPORTING NEWS

Spartans middle linebacker Reggie Garnett will be in his fourth season as a starter this year.

Defensive weaknesses: If experience counts for anything, Purdue should make improvement on a pass defense that yielded 224 yards per game. The secondary returns intact, but that won't be a blessing if the coverage hasn't improved. Tackle Jon Krick needs help on the line, where rushing the passer always is a struggle.

Special teams: The Boilers will break in a new kicker (JC transfer Chris Arnce) and punter (true freshman Danny Rogers), which isn't a good sign for a team prone to playing close games. Curtis Taylor, a redshirt last season, figures to be the top kick returner.

Key to success: Edwin Watson had a 194-yard game against Wisconsin last season on the same day Alstott rushed for 204 yards. Watson, moved from tailback to fullback, now must produce similar numbers without Alstott to occupy attention. Anything less than a 1,000-yard season will put games in the hands of the quarterbacks, none of whom has shown a propensity for being a big-game player.

Outlook: Upon arriving for the 1991 season, Colletto has pointed toward this campaign as the one in which the Boilermakers could claim a bowl bid. That goal is in reach, but only if the defense plays to the level expected of a veteran unit. Whether it can do that against a difficult schedule is debatable.

BOILERMAKERS DATA

Coach: Jim Colletto (17-35-3, 5 years; 34-73-4 overall, 10 years).
1995 record: 4-6-1. Big Ten: 2-5-1/9th.

Key losses: Craig Allen, WR; Mike Alstott, FB; Brad Bobich, K; Rob Deignan, P; Aaron Hall, OLB; Alfie Hill, OT; Bob O'Connor, MLB; Chris Sedoris, C; Charlie Stephens, TE; Jayme Washel, DT.

Starters returning: Offense (7): Brian Alford, WR, 6-2/188, Jr.; Mark Fischer, T (moved from G), 6-4/284, Jr.; John Hoogendoorn, T, 6-5/300, Jr.; Kirk Olivadotti, WR, 5-10/182, Sr.; Rick Trefzger, QB, 6-2/210, Sr.; Edwin Watson, FB (moved from TB), 6-0/215, Jr.; Emmett Zitelli, G, 6-3/295, Sr.

Defense (9): Derrick Brown, FS, 5-10/180, Jr.; Willie Burroughs, SS, 5-10/193, Soph.; Jamel Coleman, CB, 6-0/192, Soph.; Jon Krick, T (moved from E), 6-2/280, Sr.; Chike Okefor, OLB, 6-5/237, Jr.; Leo Perez, T, 6-3/285, Jr.; Greg Smith, T, 6-3/280, Jr.; Craig Williams, E, 6-4/250, Sr.; Derrick Winston, CB, 6-0/172, Sr. **Kickers:** None.

Other key returnees: Jon Blackman, TE, Jr.; Lee Brush, SS, Jr.; Billy Dicken, QB, Jr.; Willie Fells, OLB, Soph.; Eric Haddad, FB, Soph.; Joe Hagins, OLB, Sr.; Brandon Jewell, TE (moved from G), Jr.; Lee Johnson, TB, Soph.; Isaac Jones,

WR, Soph.; Noble Jones, MLB, Soph.; Damon Lewis, G, Sr.; Dan Maly, G, Jr.; Kendall Matthews, TB, Jr.; Brian Nicley, C, Jr.; Chukie Nwokorie, DE, Soph.; John Reeves, QB, Jr.; Curtis Taylor, TB/KR, Soph. (RS); Tommy Triplett, CB, Jr.

Top newcomers: Chris Arnce, K, Jr. (JC); Cullen Bryant Jr., FB, Fr.; Chris Daniels, WR, Fr. (RS); Robert Faulkner, DE, Jr. (JC); Danny Rogers, P, Fr.; Doug Withers, LB, Soph. (JC).

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Watson (102 att., 553 yds., 5 TD); Passing: Trefzger (208 att., 123 comp., 8 INT, 6 TD, 1,521 yds.); Receiving: Alford (34 rec., 686 yds., 8 TD); Tackles: Okefor (103); Sacks: Okefor (4).

Site: West Lafayette, Ind. **Stadium:** Ross-Ade (67,861).

Last league title won: 1967 (tie).

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—at Michigan State	Oct. 19—Ohio State
Sept. 14—at Notre Dame	Nov. 2—at Wisconsin
Sept. 21—West Virginia	Nov. 9—Michigan
Sept. 28—North Carolina State	Nov. 16—at Northwestern
Oct. 5—Minnesota	Nov. 23—Indiana
Oct. 12—at Penn State	

8. WISCONSIN

Offensive strengths: Tailbacks Carl McCullough and Aaron Stecker supply the kind of tag-team threat Wisconsin used to reach the Rose Bowl in the 1993 season. McCullough has the power of a Brent Moss and Stecker the speed of a Terrell Fletcher. Couple their talents with a solid line—four fifth-year seniors, including tackle Jerry Wunsch and guard Jamie Vanderveldt—and it's no secret what the Badgers plan to do on offense. Tony Simmons has converted 29 percent of his career receptions into touchdowns.

Offensive weaknesses: It seems Darrell Bevell was the starting quarterback for years, but he was around for only four seasons. Whether sophomore Mike Samuel is a capable replacement is unknown, but his inexperience certainly is a concern. He has thrown just 31 passes in his career.

Defensive strengths: Big-play end Tarek Saleh should get the chance to surpass his 12 sacks from last season thanks to an improved secondary. The entire unit returns and should be better now that converted receiver Kevin Huntley and converted quarterback Cyril Weems have a season's experience at their new positions. Linebacker Pete Monty is a tackling machine, and end Bryan Jurewicz is a veteran presence.

Defensive weaknesses: The Badgers were shaky defending the run last season and look to be vulnerable again given the graduation of all-conference tackle Jason Maniecki. The hope is that sophomore Tom Burke can step forward and become dominant after getting some playing time last year. Too bad that at 253, he's 20 pounds away from being big enough to cause much trouble.

Special teams: There isn't a stronger leg in college football than John Hall's. Trouble is, he isn't very accurate. Stecker's 24.2-yard kickoff return average was the best among the nation's freshmen. Brian Alexander must improve on his 36.3-yard punting average.

Key to success: Simmons is one of the Big Ten's best, but his value may be diminished if Samuel struggles. No matter how well he handles the pressure, it's doubtful Samuel can replace the 207 yards passing Bevell averaged per game last season.

Outlook: Now is the time for the recruits Barry Alvarez signed in the wake of Wisconsin's Rose Bowl success to emerge. So far, they haven't proven to be as good or better than the players they've replaced,

which is why the Badgers should fall short of a bowl bid again.

BADGERS DATA

Coach: Barry Alvarez (32-32-4, 6 years).

1995 record: 4-5-2. Big Ten: 3-4-1/77th.

Key losses: Darrell Bevell, QB; Michael London, WR; Jason Maniecki, DT; Matt Nyquist, TE; Eric Unverzagt, LB; Chad Youcum, DE.

Starters returning: **Offense (8):** Cayetano Castro, G (moved from T), 6-6/310, Sr.; James Darby, G, 6-5/288, Sr.; Cecil Martin, FB, 6-2/229, Soph.; Carl McCullough, TB, 6-3/225, Jr.; Mike Rader, C, 6-5/294, Sr.; Tony Simmons, WR, 6-2/201, Jr.; Jamie Vanderveldt, G, 6-5/305, Sr.; Jerry Wunsch, T, 6-6/315, Sr. **Defense (8):** Daryl Carter, OLB, 6-2/218, Sr.; Kevin Huntley, FS, 6-2/202, Jr.; Bryan Jurewicz, E, 6-5/275, Sr.; Pete Monty, ILB, 6-2/241, Sr.; Tarek Saleh, E, 6-3/236, Sr.; Jason Suttle, CB, 5-11/181, Jr.; Leonard Taylor, SS, 6-0/186, Soph.; Cyril Weems, CB, 6-2/205, Sr. **Kickers (2):** Brian Alexander, P, 6-3/198, Sr.; John Hall, K, 6-3/231, Sr.

Other key returnees: Bob Adamov, SS, Soph.; Tom Burke, DT, Soph.; Derek Engler, C (moved from G), Sr.; Brian Flanagan, LB, Jr.; Donald Hayes, WR, Jr.; David Lysek, LB, Jr.; Neil Miklusak, DT, Sr.; Royce Roberson, TB, Jr.; Mike Samuel, QB, Soph.; Ryan Sondrup, TE, Soph.; Rod Spiller, DT, Sr.; Aaron Stecker, TB, Soph.; John Waerig, FB, Soph.

Top newcomers: Demetrius Brown, WR, Fr. (RS); Pat Daley, OT, Fr. (RS); Ron Dayne, FB, Fr.; Scott Kavanagh, QB, Fr.; Chris McIntosh, OT, Fr. (RS); Ahmad Merritt, WR, Fr. (RS); Eric Pauly, DE, Fr. (RS); Rob Roell, DE, Fr. (RS); Jamie Spielman, LB, Fr. (RS); Marcus White, QB, Fr. (RS); Mark Zanders, QB, Fr. (RS).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** McCullough (236 att., 1,086 yds., 3 TD); **Passing:** Samuel (31 att., 11 comp., 1 INT, 2 TD, 166 yds.); **Receiving:** Simmons (29 rec., 504 yds., 7 TD); **Tackles:** Monty (137); **Sacks:** Saleh (12).

Site: Madison, Wisc. **Stadium:** Camp Randall (76,129).

Last league title won: 1993 (tie).

SCHEDULE

Sept. 7—Eastern Michigan	Oct. 26—at Michigan State
Sept. 14—at UNLV	Nov. 2—Purdue
Sept. 21—Stanford	Nov. 9—Minnesota
Sept. 28—Penn State	Nov. 16—at Iowa
Oct. 12—at Ohio State	Nov. 23—at Illinois
Oct. 19—Northwestern	Nov. 30—at Hawaii

9. INDIANA

Offensive strengths: He didn't play like it last year, but quarterback Chris Dittoe has the talent to be the best passer in Bill Mallory's 13 seasons at Indiana. Maybe it was the pressure of being the clear No. 1 for the first time in his career that held Dittoe down in '95. This year, he has no excuses. If tailback Alex Smith can regain his freshman form after an injury-filled sophomore season, look out. He'll benefit from the blocking of guard Tom Lukawski and center Jay Seib, who headline a veteran line.

Offensive weaknesses: The Hoosiers, who ranked last in the Big Ten in scoring and 10th in total offense, can't hope to rebound from their worst season since 1984 unless the big play returns. Smith has the ability to go the distance, but he won't go anywhere if Indiana's line doesn't improve.

Defensive strengths: End Nathan Davis could be in for an All-American season. His 20 tackles for loss came with every offense keying against him. Now that 1994 super recruit Bo Barzilauskas, a tackle, has returned from a self-imposed one-season sabbatical, there is enough depth to put Davis in more one-on-one situations.

Defensive weaknesses: It's never a good sign when a strong safety leads the team in tackles, and that's what Aaron Warnecke did for the Hoosiers last year. Maybe the return of three starting linebackers will solidify the run defense. If not, look for red-shirt JC transfer Kywin Supernaw to get a shot at strong safety.

Special teams: Injuries kept Bill Manolopoulos from repeating his All-Big

Ten season of 1994. He should be back to full strength after connecting on 9-of-12 field goals. Alan Sutkowski averaged 42.1 yards per punt, second in the Big Ten.

Key to success: Mallory reacted to his team's winless Big Ten record by shaking up his staff. New defensive coordinator Steve Stripling, a longtime Mallory assistant, and new quarterbacks/passing game coordinator Kit Cartwright, hired from Michigan, are being given great latitude to help orchestrate a turnaround. But if the Hoosiers don't improve their league-worst minus-19 turnover margin, no one's job will be easy.

Outlook: Indiana has too much talent at the skill positions to finish last in the league again. Whether it can make a big leap in the standings, or modest improvement, will hinge on whether the defense can prevent the big plays that haunted the Hoosiers last year.

HOOSIERS DATA

Coach: Bill Mallory (65-70-3, 12 years; 164-122-4 overall, 26 years).

1995 record: 2-9. Big Ten: 0-8/11th.

Key losses: John Hammerstein, DT; Eric Matthews, WR; Louis Pinnock, DE; Eli Rasheed, DT; Eric Smedley, FS; Clay Williams, OT.

Starters returning: **Offense (9):** Chris Dittoe, QB, 6-6/230, Sr.; Steve Lee, FB, 6-1/250, Sr.; Chris Liwienski, T, 6-6/290, Jr.; Tom Lukawski, G, 6-2/280, Sr.; Mike Mihelic, G, 6-5/290, Sr.; Jay Seib, C, 6-6/285, Sr.; Alex Smith, TB, 6-0/205, Jr.; Ajamu Stoner, WR, 6-0/185, Sr.; Darin Ward, TE, 6-1/235, Sr. **Defense (7):** Eric Allen, FS (moved from CB), 6-1/190, Sr.; Jamie Baisley, LB, 6-2/235, Sr.; Nathan Davis, E, 6-5/280, Sr.; Joey Eloms, CB, 5-11/185, Jr.; Jabar Robinson, LB, 6-2/230, Soph.; Matt Surface, LB, 6-2/220, Sr.; Aaron Warnecke, SS, 6-1/195, Jr. **Kickers (2):** Bill Manolopoulos, K, 5-10/165, Sr.; Alan Sutkowski, P, 6-1/185, Jr.

Other key returnees: Khalifani Banks, OT, Jr.; Bo Barzilauskas, DT, Soph. (RS); Brian Bobay, DE, Soph.; Curt

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Goode, TE, Soph.; Greg Jenkins, OT, Soph.; Benyard Jones, DE, Jr.; Ben Klusmeyer, TE, Jr.; Joe King, CB, Jr.; Dorian Wilkerson, WR, Jr.; Aaron Williams, DE, Soph.

Top newcomers: Jason Czap, DE, Fr. (RS); James Lamar, LB, Fr. (RS); Adewale Ogunleye, DE, Fr. (RS); Robert Parrish, WR, Fr. (RS); Al Phillips, LB, Fr. (RS); Patrick Shaw, CB, Fr. (RS); Kywin Supernaw, SS, Jr. (JC/RS).

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Smith (166 att., 769 yds., 3 TD); Passing: Dittoe (196 att., 102 comp., 6 INT, 3 TD, 1,214 yds.); Receiving: Stoner (29 rec., 412 yds., 1 TD);

Tackles: Warnecke (99); **Sacks:** Davis (6).

Site: Bloomington, Ind. **Stadium:** Memorial (52,354).

Last league title won: 1967 (tie).

SCHEDULE

Sept. 7—at Toledo	Oct. 19—at Michigan
Sept. 14—Miami (Ohio)	Oct. 26—Penn State
Sept. 21—at Kentucky	Nov. 9—at Michigan State
Sept. 28—Northwestern	Nov. 16—Ohio State
Oct. 5—at Illinois	Nov. 23—at Purdue
Oct. 12—Iowa	

10. ILLINOIS

Offensive strengths: Although neither is a breakaway back, Robert Holcombe and Ty Douthard are a capable combination. The mystery is why Illinois would move Douthard from fullback back to tailback, where he and Holcombe will be forced to split time. The duo should benefit from a line that returns five starters. Rangy Jason Dulick is a dependable target.

Offensive weaknesses: Why did Illinois disappoint last season? Blame it on the offense, which ranked last in the Big Ten. Running was particularly troublesome. Scott Weaver had plenty of chances to secure the quarterback job before doing it in the spring, but the fact that he did so by default shouldn't inspire much confidence. Maybe the graduation of Johnny Johnson is what Weaver needs to blossom. That's possible—but also doubtful.

Defensive strengths: Illinois lost Butkus Award winner Kevin Hardy and perhaps the nation's top rusher in Simeon Rice, but the Illini didn't lose its best linebacker. Not statistically, anyway. Senior Dennis Stallings led the Illini in tackles and interceptions last year and should be better as the feature player. He's joined by David James, who's ready to emerge.

Defensive weaknesses: Rice's departure lessens Illinois' ability to harass quarterbacks, but a rush may be moot if the Illini doesn't defend the run better. Opponents were seldom forced to pass last season, so Illinois led the league in pass defense because of a lack of activity more than ability. Nose tackle Paul Marshall needs help on the line, and it may come from mega-recruit Eric Jefferson.

Special teams: There isn't a proven big-play return man on the roster, nor does Illinois have an established punter. But there are no kicking concerns thanks to Bret Scheuplein, who hit 10-of-17 field-goal attempts in 1995.

Key to success: Illinois' offense was a disaster last season, with Lou Tepper yanking quarterbacks not game-by-game but quarter-by-quarter. He won't be able to do that this year because he doesn't have a capable backup. He also doesn't have much defense against those who keep harping that he made a mistake by replacing Greg Landry with Paul Schudel as the offensive coordinator before last season.

Outlook: If Illinois couldn't get a bowl bid with five starters returning from the



Junior wide receiver Tutu Atwell should be a prime target in Minnesota's passing attack.

league's best defense in '94, why be optimistic about eight starters coming back from an offense that was pathetic in '95?

FIGHTING ILLINI DATA

Coach: Lou Tepper (23-22-1, 4 years).

1995 record: 5-5-1. Big Ten: 3-4-1/77th.

Key losses: Ken Blackman, OT; Shane Fisher, WR; Kevin Hardy, LB; Johnny Johnson, QB; Brett Larsen, P; Duane Lyle, CB; Tim McCloud, DT; Antwoine Patton, FS; Simeon Rice, LB; Tyrone Washington, SS.

Starters returning: **Offense (8):** Chris Brown, C (moved from T), 6-3/290, Jr.; Matt Cushing, TE, 6-4/255, Jr.; Ty Douthard, TB (moved from FB), 6-1/215, Sr.; Jason Dulick, WR, 6-4/200, Sr.; Robert Holcombe, TB, 5-11/209, Jr.; Jay Kuchenbecker, T (moved from G), 6-5/280, Sr.; Chris Koerwitz, G, 6-2/306, Sr.; Scott Weaver, QB, 6-2/206, Sr. **Defense (6):** David James, ILB, 6-0/244, Jr.; Garrett Johnson, T, 6-3/274, Soph.; Paul Marshall, NT, 6-3/260, Sr.; Dennis Stallings, LB, 6-0/232, Sr.; Trevor Starghill, CB, 5-8/182, Jr.; James Williams, CB, 6-0/188, Jr. **Kickers (1):** Bret Scheuplein, K, 6-2/196, Jr.

Other key returnees: Chico Brown, OT, Soph.; Cyron Brown, LB, Jr.; Rodney Byrd, FB, Sr.; Mike Gusch, SS, Soph.; Steve Havard, TB, Soph.; Marquis Mosely, SE, Jr.; Ryan Murphy, LB, Soph.; Ryan Schau, T (moved from G), Soph.; Brent Taylor, G, Jr.; Toriano Woods, FS, Sr.

Top newcomers: Danny Clark, LB, Fr. (RS); Rameel Connor, DT, Fr. (RS); Mike Flaar, G, Fr. (RS); Elmer Hickman, FB, Fr. (RS); Eric Jefferson, DL, Fr.; Antoine McNutt, G, Fr. (RS); Manuel Strong, LB, Fr. (RS); Marques Sullivan, OL, Fr.

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Holcombe (264 att., 1,051 yds., 5 TD); Passing: Weaver (103 att., 55 comp., 10 INT, 3 TD, 629 yds.); Receiving: Dulick (36 rec., 453 yds., 3 TD);

Tackles: Stallings (130); **Sacks:** Johnson, Cyron Brown (2).

Site: Champaign, Ill. **Stadium:** Memorial (70,904).

Last league title won: 1990 (tie).

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—at Michigan	Oct. 26—at Northwestern
Sept. 7—Southern California	Nov. 2—Iowa
Sept. 14—at Arizona	Nov. 9—Ohio State
Sept. 21—Akron	Nov. 16—at Minnesota
Oct. 5—Indiana	Nov. 23—Wisconsin
Oct. 12—at Michigan State	

11. MINNESOTA

Offensive strengths: Quarterback Cory Sauter completed 60.4 percent of his passes for 2,600 yards, both school records. That's not bad for a sophomore who wasn't even a clear No. 1 when the season began, but it is bad news for defenses that have to contain a more confident Sauter. He'll have good targets in Ryan Thelwell and Tutu Atwell.

Offensive weaknesses: Size isn't a problem for Minnesota up front, where tackle Gann Brooks is the main man, but being big doesn't assure success. Sauter's preoccupation with the short pass wasn't always by design. Most times, it was a matter of survival. Promising running back Rafael Cooper was kicked off the team in

the spring. That means Javon Jackson and a pair of redshirt freshmen will try to fill Chris Darkins' shoes.

Defensive strengths: It takes a microscope to find one on a unit that ranked last in the Big Ten in scoring, passing and overall defense, and 10th against the run. That's why Tim Rose was hired from Cincinnati. He had the Bearcats, and Memphis before that, among the top defensive teams in the nation. His unit will be anchored by strong safety Rodney Heath and tackle Jerome Davis.

Defensive weaknesses: When a defense is as bad as the Gophers' 1995 edition, it's never one area that causes the problem. Instead, the symptoms are more widespread and hard to erase, and in Minnesota's case that means a shortage of size up front and speed in the secondary.

Special teams: True freshman punter Steve Kempf could offer immediate help and will benefit from working indoors. Return men Heath and Cooper are threats that must be respected. The search for a replacement for Groza Award finalist Mike Chaberg will continue into two-a-days.

Key to success: If Rose can scrape together a defense by shifting players around in Minnesota's new 3-4 alignment, maybe the Gophers won't feel pressured to score 50 points in order to win.

Outlook: Jim Wacker has been able to stay upbeat through some disappointing campaigns. For the first time, he has an entire team of his recruits. Maybe that's why he's smiling. Or maybe he's an eternal optimist.

GOLDEN GOPHERS DATA

Coach: Jim Wacker (12-32, 4 years; 156-123-3 overall, 25 years).

1995 record: 3-8. Big Ten: 1-7/10th.

Key losses: Toby Anderson, G; Mike Chaberg, K; Justin Conzemius, LB; Rafael Cooper, RB (dismissed from team); Chris Darkins, RB; Mike Giovannetti, OT; Garrison Harman, P; Todd Jesewitz, C; Tony Levine, SB; Matt Reem, TE; Craig Sauer, LB; Johnny Woodson, FB.

Starters returning: **Offense (4):** Chris Bergstrom, G, 6-3/307, Sr.; Gann Brooks, T, 6-8/302, Sr.; Cory Sauter, QB, 6-5/214, Jr.; Ryan Thelwell, WR, 6-2/180, Jr. **Defense (8):** Ogun Akbar, NG (moved from E), 6-3/253, Sr.; Terrance Blayne, CB, 5-11/177, Sr.; Jerome Davis, T (moved from E), 6-5/265, Sr.; Rishon Early, FS, 6-1/175, Sr.; Rodney Heath, SS (moved from CB), 5-10/170, Sr.; Crawford Jordan, FS (moved from SS), 5-11/172, Jr.; Ben Langford, ILB, 6-2/220, Sr.; Antoine Richard, T, 6-4/270, Soph. **Kickers:** None.

Other key returnees: Tutu Atwell, WR, Jr.; Jeff Baldauf, G, Jr.; Mark Cross, OLB, Jr.; Luke Herkenhoff, OT, Jr.; Javon Jackson, RB, Jr.; Gregg James, C, Jr.; Paul Kratochvil, TE, Sr.; Greg Nelson, WR, Jr.; Craig Scruggs, CB, Soph.; Rufus Smith, OLB, Soph.; Mark Tangen, TE, Sr.; Dave Watson, NT, Soph.; Deon White, ILB, Soph.; Don Williams, OLB, Sr.; Lamanzer Williams, DT, Jr.; Parc Williams, ILB, Soph.

Top newcomers: Tyrone Carter, SS, Fr. (RS); Mike Cernoch, DT, Fr. (RS); Donny Dalton, LB, Jr. (JC); Jerome Elliott, DL, Soph. (JC); Byron Evans, RB, Fr. (RS); Thomas Hamner, RB, Fr. (RS); Kris Hofferth, OT, Fr. (RS); Steve Kempf, P, Fr.; Tony Vann, WR, Fr. (RS); Ryan Venturine, LB, Soph. (JC); Verdis Webb, RB, Fr. (RS).

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Jackson (43 att., 201 yds., 1 TD); Passing: Sauter (338 att., 204 comp., 13 INT, 18 TD, 2,600 yds.); Receiving: Thelwell (58 rec. 775 yds., 6 TD); Tackles: Jordan (58); Sacks: L. Williams (3). **Site:** Minneapolis. **Stadium:** Metrodome (63,669). **Last league title won:** 1967 (tie).

SCHEDULE

Sept. 7—at Northeast Louisiana	Oct. 26—Michigan
Sept. 14—Ball State	Nov. 2—at Ohio State
Sept. 21—Syracuse	Nov. 9—at Wisconsin
Oct. 5—at Purdue	Nov. 16—Illinois
Oct. 12—at Northwestern	Nov. 23—Iowa
Oct. 19—Michigan State	

Bruce Hooley covers Ohio State and the Big Ten for the Cleveland Plain Dealer.

SCOUTING THE BIG TEN

Ascending: Northwestern. OK, so it's not possible to ascend much higher than the Rose Bowl. Consider this label overdue for the Wildcats, whose Cinderella title run caught everyone by surprise. Now coach Gary Barnett is expected to have his team in a bowl every year, which would have been unthinkable only 12 months ago. The thought here is Barnett will get it done.

Descending: Wisconsin. A boatload of returning talent in 1994 got the Badgers only a fourth-place finish, and Wisconsin was shut out of the bowls last year. Now Barry Alvarez has a young team trying to catch lightning in a bottle again.

Nightmare schedule: Michigan. The Wolverines annually play the league's toughest non-conference opponents. Last year was an exception, but they're back on track in 1996. After opening against Illinois, the Wolverines go to Colorado, then get Boston College and UCLA at home before going to Northwestern. Oh, yeah, Michigan closes with back-to-back games against Penn State and Ohio State.

Dream schedule: Ohio State. Can you say cream puff? You can if you're John Cooper, whose Buckeyes get Rice and Pittsburgh at home to start the season and begin the Big Ten with consecutive home games against Penn State and Wisconsin. OSU's four Big Ten road opponents all finished in the second division last year.

Best matchup of year: Northwestern at Iowa, November 9. The Wildcats should go to Kinnick Stadium still in the hunt for a second Big Ten title; Iowa will be contending, too, and seeks revenge for last season's loss in Evanston.

Worst matchup of year: Northern Illinois at Penn State, September 14. This will be the first meeting between the Huskies and the Lions. Has anyone been clamoring for it? No one but the school treasurer at NIU, which will be paid handsomely for serving as an afternoon snack in University Park.

Bowl bound: Northwestern's soft non-conference schedule assures the Wildcats will go bowling again, joining Penn State, Ohio State, Michigan and Iowa. Michigan State won't make it because of road games at Nebraska, Iowa, Michigan and Penn State.

Biggest shoes to fill: Ohio State RB Eddie George's. Replacing a Heisman Trophy winner brings a white-hot spotlight, which Ohio State junior Pepe Pearson finds himself in. George's understudy the previous two seasons, Pearson is accustomed to following an icon. As a high school freshman in Euclid, Ohio, he followed Robert Smith.

Most overrated player: Illinois tailback Robert Holcombe. If Holcombe, who ran for 1,051 yards in '95, was so good, would coach Lou Tepper be moving his starting fullback, Ty Douthard, to tailback to chal-

HONOR ROLL

Best offensive backfield:	Northwestern.
Best wide receivers:	Minnesota.
Best offensive line:	Ohio State.
Best defensive line:	Ohio State.
Best linebackers:	Northwestern.
Best secondary:	Penn State.
Best special teams:	Iowa.
Hardest hitter:	Pat Fitzgerald, LB, Northwestern.
Best backup quarterback:	Mark Garcia, Ohio State.
Best pro prospect:	Sedrick Shaw, RB, Iowa.
Best game-day atmosphere:	Wisconsin.

RANKING THE RECRUITING

Top recruit in parentheses

1. Ohio State (LB Andy Katzenmoyer). Katzenmoyer's signing headlines the nation's best class. The Buckeyes also signed some great backs, linemen and receivers.
2. Penn State (QB Rashard Casey).
3. Michigan (OL Jeff Backus).
4. Michigan State (RB Sedrick Irvin).
5. Illinois (DL Eric Jefferson).
6. Wisconsin (TE Mike Solowid).
7. Northwestern (OL Jack Harnedy).
8. Indiana (QB Earl Haniford).
9. Iowa (OL Billy Brann).
10. Purdue (FB Cullen Bryant Jr.).
11. Minnesota (DL Jerome Elliott).



Cornerback Charles Woodson will have to be at his best as Michigan faces a murderous schedule.

lenge for the position?

Most underrated player: Northwestern quarterback Steve Schnur. At the start of last season, Schnur wasn't among the top two guys contesting the job. You know the rest.

Best coach: Penn State's Joe Paterno. JoePa keeps rolling along—and winning. Special mention must go to Northwestern's Gary Barnett. In January 1992, Barnett promised to “take the

Purple to Pasadena.” He delivered four years later.

Best staff: Ohio State. John Cooper's aides keep leaving town and he keeps finding better guys to replace them. Former NFL assistant Walt Harris revitalized the pass offense last year and, given his experience, former Memphis coach Chuck Stobart is slumming it as OSU's wide receivers coach. This year, watch first-year defensive coordinator Fred Pagac, the last link to Woody Hayes' staff, turn the Buckeyes blitz-happy.

Coach on the hot seat: Illinois' Lou Tepper. There isn't a better defensive coordinator, but questions remain whether Tepper can transfer his coaching abilities to the team. This will be his first team without the influence of John Mackovic's recruiting, and it may not be a pretty sight.

Best bets: Northwestern will soar into the Top 10 after starting with victories over Wake Forest, Duke, Ohio University and Indiana. ... Notre Dame will exact revenge on Ohio State for last year's 45-26 beating in Columbus, and OSU fans immediately will begin grumbling about John Cooper's inability to win big games. ... Stories will begin surfacing about the psychological impact of the pink walls in Iowa's visiting locker room once the Hawkeyes make a move in the national rankings. ... Purdue coach Jim Colletto will replace starting quarterback Rick Trefzger with John Reeves, then Reeves with Billy Dicken, then go back to Trefzger. Such are the perils of playing for a coach who's a former offensive coordinator.

Odds and ends: Michigan didn't have a spring game because of stadium renovations. Replacement of the sod made a game impossible. Michigan also is in the midst of a five-year project to replace the chain-link fence surrounding the stadium with brick pillars and wrought-iron fencing. ... Penn State strong safety Ambrose Fletcher collapsed while lifting weights January 26 and remains questionable to play this fall. Doctors had not diagnosed what caused his collapse by late spring. Fletcher did not participate in spring practice. ... Ohio State fans are steamed about getting only 5,000 tickets to a September 28 game at Notre Dame. Last year, Notre Dame fans received 7,500 tickets to the game in Columbus, nearly twice the amount OSU normally makes available to visiting teams. ... Recruiting is a funny business. Just ask Ohio State, which lost headline tailback recruit Durrell Price to UCLA when Price mistakenly faxed the wrong page of his letter-of-intent to Columbus, then took that as a sign he should sign with the Bruins. OSU made up for that by getting linebacker Na'il Diggs after he backed out on an oral commitment to USC.

—BRUCE HOOLEY

1. SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Offensive strengths: As usual, quarterback. Brad Otton is 10-1-1 as the Trojans' starter and has more poise than most collegians. At 6-6, he is USC's tallest quarterback ever. Just one starter returns on the offensive line, but there were an astounding 20 linemen on the spring roster and more tight ends than most NFL teams.

Offensive weaknesses: That one returning lineman, Phalen Pounds, is questionable for 1996 after shoulder surgery. The Trojans had a lot of depth at tailback last year and wound up needing all of it. Delon Washington had five 100-yard games, but he isn't your classic USC tailback. Wide receivers Chris Miller and Larry Parker combined won't be as productive as the departed Keyshawn Johnson. Miller and Parker combined to catch 46 passes last season. Johnson caught 102. Watch for sophomore Billy Miller.

Defensive strengths: Cornerback Daylon McCutcheon is so good he'd be playing tailback at other schools (and might for USC). The secondary is exceptional and deep. Darrell Russell and Matt Keneley form a stout 1-2 punch on the line.

Defensive weaknesses: USC hasn't had a dominating linebacker since Junior Seau and won't in '96, either. Sammy Knight, a former safety, moves to linebacker. USC needs Russell to be a monster consistently instead of occasionally.

Special teams: Dueling kickers Adam Abrams and Adam Rendon, who despise each other, combined to make 9-of-13 field goals last year. Parker, Miller and McCutcheon will make the return teams a threat. Finding a replacement for four-year punter John Stonehouse will be difficult.

Keys to success: Beating Notre Dame, something USC hasn't done in 13 consecutive tries, is one. Beating UCLA, which the Trojans haven't done in the past five tries (a record in the history of the rivalry), is another.

Outlook: USC thumped its chest with pride after beating Northwestern in the Rose Bowl, but it sort of underachieved in 1995, considering its two losses were against main rivals Notre Dame and UCLA. Without question, the Trojans have the best overall talent in the conference, but they still aren't as physically dominant as John Robinson would like.

TROJANS DATA

Coach: John Robinson (92-24-4, 10 years).

1995 record: 9-2-1 (beat Northwestern in Rose Bowl). Pac-10: 6-1-1/1st.

Key losses: Terry Barnum, RB; Marcus Bonds, DE; Scott Fields, LB; Stuart Gage, DT; Norberto Garrido, OT; Brian Haas, LB; Errick Herrin, LB; Jeremy Hogue, C; Israel Ifeanyi, DE; Keyshawn Johnson, WR; Johnny McWilliams, TE; John Michels, OT; Micah Phillips, S; John Ramsay, G; John Stonehouse, P; Kyle Wachholtz, QB.

Starters returning: **Offense (4):** Brad Otton, QB, 6-6/235, Sr.; Larry Parker, WR, 6-2/190, Jr.; Phalen Pounds, G, 6-7/310, Jr. (status questionable because of offseason shoulder surgery); Delon Washington, TB, 5-11/190, Jr. **Defense (7):** Quincy Harrison, CB, 5-11/185, Sr.; Brian Kelly, FS (moved from CB), 6-1/190, Jr.; Matt Keneley, T, 6-5/285, Sr.; Sammy Knight, LB (moved from SS), 6-1/195, Sr.; Willie Lowery, E, 6-5/255, Sr.; Daylon McCutcheon, CB, 5-11/175, Soph.; Darrell Russell, T, 6-4/320, Jr. **Kickers (2):** Adam Abrams, K, 5-9/170, Soph.; Adam Rendon, P, 6-2/205, Soph.

PACIFIC-10

Conference Rank: 4

By BOB KEISSER

PREDICTIONS

1. SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
2. ARIZONA STATE
3. OREGON
4. WASHINGTON
5. STANFORD
6. ARIZONA
7. UCLA
8. CALIFORNIA
9. WASHINGTON STATE
10. OREGON STATE



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Senior Matt Keneley is part of a dynamite defensive tackle duo for Southern California.

Other key returnees: John Allred, TE, Sr.; Ken Bowen, OT, Soph.; Chris Brymer, G, Jr. (RS/academics); Rashard Cook, S, Soph.; Mark Cusano, LB, Soph.; Rome Douglas, OT, Soph.; Leonard Green, TB, Sr. (RS/foot); Ken Haslip, CB, Soph.; Jonathan Himebauch, C, Jr.; Billy Miller, WR, Soph.; Chris Miller, WR, Sr.; Taso Papadakis, LB, Jr. (RS/knee); Grant Pearsall, S, Jr.; David Pratchard, G, Sr.; George Perry, DE, Jr.; Rodney Sermons, TB, Jr.; Shawn Walters, FB, Sr.; LaVale Woods, TB, Jr.

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Washington (236 att., 1,109 yds., 6 TD); **Passing:** Otton (256 att., 159 comp., 4 INT, 14 TD, 1,923 yds.); **Receiving:** Parker (25 rec., 270 yds., 0 TD); **Tackles:** Knight (89); **Sacks:** Keneley, Russell (4).

Top newcomers: Grant Boelter, OT, Jr. (JC); Chris Claiborne, LB, Fr.; Travis Claridge, OT, Fr.; Troy Garner, WR, Fr.; Stan Guyness, WR, Fr.; Travis Hall, TE, Sr. (transfer/Cal State Northridge); Faaesee Mailo, G, Fr.; R. Jay Soward, WR, Fr.; Aaron Williams, DE, Fr. (RS); Quincy Woods, QB, Fr. (RS); Jim Wren, P, Jr. (JC).

Site: Los Angeles. **Stadium:** Los Angeles Memorial (92,000). **Last league title won:** 1995 (tie).

SCHEDULE

Aug. 25—Penn State*	Oct. 26—at Washington State
Sept. 7—at Illinois	Nov. 2—Washington
Sept. 14—Oregon State	Nov. 9—at Stanford
Sept. 21—at Houston	Nov. 23—at UCLA
Oct. 5—California	Nov. 30—Notre Dame
Oct. 12—Arizona	(*Kickoff Classic)
Oct. 19—at Arizona State	

2. ARIZONA STATE

Offensive strengths: ASU should do everything well on offense this year. Mobile quarterback Jake Plummer has started 28 consecutive games, Keith Poole (19.6-yard career average) is a big-play receiver, Kenny Mitchell and Ricky Boyer lend receiving depth, and there's experience in the backfield, Bruce Snyder's favorite mode of travel. Running back J.R. Redmond had a terrific spring.

Offensive weaknesses: Tackle Juan Roque is an All-American candidate, but overall the line has lacked stability because of personnel shuffling. Snyder needs to settle on a regular unit and end the turnstile the line has become. If he does, there may be no stopping this offense.

Defensive strengths: Scott Von der Ahe and Derek Smith are better than average Pac-10 linebackers. They are more than capably backed up by free safety Mitchell Freedman, who is guaranteed to lead the league in big hits.

Defensive weaknesses: The Sun Devils had a miserable pass rush (18 sacks) in '95 and were soft on the corners (just six interceptions). Unfortunately for them, they have the same look again. Their standout defenders have to make too many downfield tackles.

Special teams: Considering the skill talent, the return numbers last year were weak. Terry Battle averaged 23.5 yards on four kickoff returns and Poole averaged 5.6 yards on 26 punt returns. But the kickers appear solid. Lance Anderson had seven punts of more than 50 yards, and Robert Nycz was 11-of-16 on field-goal attempts.

Key to success: Numbers. A year ago, Snyder began the season with just 75 scholarship players and two players remaining from the 1991 recruiting class. Now he has 47 lettermen back and 43 off last year's two-deep. Arizona State won't play shorthanded in 1996.

Outlook: Sunny and warm. Snyder's breakthrough year at Cal was his fifth (10-2), and this is year five for him at ASU. Last year's squad was seven points away from a 6-0 run to end the season. In '96, the Sun Devils leave the state only three times and open the season with five consecutive home games. Everything, it seems, is pointing their way.

SUN DEVILS DATA

Coach: Bruce Snyder (21-23, 4 years; 89-84-5 overall, 16 years).

1995 record: 6-5. Pac-10: 4-4/T5th.

Key losses: Justin Dragoo, ILB; Chris Hopkins, TB; Mike Langridge, DE; Ryan Wood, RB.

Starters returning: **Offense (9):** Steve Bush, TE, 6-3/258, Sr.; Glen Gable, G, 6-5/295, Jr.; Kyle Murphy, G, 6-4/298, Jr.; Isaiah Mustata, WR, 6-4/216, Sr.; Jake Plummer, QB, 6-2/190, Sr.; Keith Poole, WR, 6-2/185, Sr.; Kirk Robertson, C, 6-5/305, Sr.; Juan Roque, T, 6-8/320, Sr.; Pat Thompson, G, 6-2/336, Sr. **Defense (8):** Brent Burnstein, E, 6-8/270, Sr.; Mitchell Freedman, FS, 6-0/192, Soph.; Jason Reynolds, T, 6-2/275, Jr.; Damien Richardson, SS, 6-2/210, Jr.; Jason Simmons, CB, 5-10/175, Jr.; Derek Smith, ILB, 6-2/232, Sr.; Shawn



ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

Underrated Keith Poole should be the primary receiver for the Sun Devils this season.

Swayda, T, 6-5/279, Jr.; Scott Von der Ahe, ILB, 6-0/247, Jr. Kickers (2): Lance Anderson, P, 6-1/215, Sr.; Robert Nycz, K, 5-11/194, Jr.

Other key returnees: Vince Amey, DT, Jr.; Mike Barnes, G, Soph.; Terry Battle, TB, Jr.; Ricky Boyer, WR, Soph.; Malchi Crawford, DE, Jr.; Marlon Farlow, TB, Soph. (RS); Traivon Johnson, CB, Sr.; Devin Kendall, TE, Sr.; Randy Leaphart, G/C, Soph.; Michael Martin, TB, Jr.; Kenny Mitchell, WR, Soph.; Lamont Morgan, CB, Soph.; Jeff Paulk, FB, Soph.; Harlen Rashada, SS, Sr. (RS/suspension); Grey Ruegamer, OT, Soph.; Marcus Soward, CB, Sr. (RS); Pat Tillman, OLB, Jr.; Marcus Williams, P/K, Jr.

Top newcomers: J'Juan Cherry, CB, Fr.; Ryan Kealy, QB, Fr.; J.R. Redmond, RB, Fr.; Ryan Reilly, DT, Fr. (RS); Derrick Rodgers, OLB, Jr. (JC); Creig Spann, WR, Jr. (JC); Jeremy Staat, DE, Jr. (JC); Stephen Trejo, LB, Fr.

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Martin (138 att., 566 yds., 5 TD); Passing: Plummer (301 att., 173 comp., 9 INT, 17 TD, 2,222 yds.); Receiving: Poole (55 rec., 1,036 yds., 7 TD); Tackles: Von der Ahe (92); Sacks: Reynolds (6).

Site: Tempe, Ariz. **Stadium:** Sun Devil (73,656).

Last league title won: 1986 (tie).

SCHEDULE

Sept. 7—Washington	Oct. 19—Southern California
Sept. 14—North Texas	Oct. 26—at Stanford
Sept. 21—Nebraska	Nov. 2—at Oregon State
Sept. 28—Oregon	Nov. 9—California
Oct. 5—Boise State	Nov. 23—at Arizona
Oct. 12—at UCLA	

3. OREGON

Offensive strengths: The Ducks return quarterback Tony Graziani, who finished eighth in the nation in total offense last year. A line that allowed a league-low 17 sacks returns four starters. Josh Wilcox and Blake Spence form a double-tight end alignment many NFL teams would envy.

Offensive weaknesses: The offense went flat late last season, scoring just two touchdowns in the last 3½ games. The Ducks need sophomore Kevin Parker to replace dependable Ricky Whittle in the backfield

and for wide receiver Dameron Ricketts to revert to his 1994 form (36 receptions, 464 yards).

Defensive strengths: Despite heavy personnel losses, the Ducks still have as many impact players on defense as any team in the Pac-10. The best are cornerback Kenny Wheaton, linebackers Derrick Barnes and Reggie Jordan and end Mark Schmidt. Wheaton played several games last year with one hand in a cast after breaking his thumb.

Defensive weaknesses: The Ducks ranked eighth nationally against the run last year, but two of the players most responsible for that—inside linebackers Jeremy Asher and Rich Ruhl—are gone. The Ducks need safety Jaiya Figueras and linebacker Jeff Branson to become full-time players again after suffering ankle injuries last year.

Special teams: Despite losing Matt Belden (torn thigh muscle) in the last year's opener, the Ducks kicked well in 1995. Joshua Smith made nine of his last 10 field-goal attempts and punter Josh Bidwell sacrificed distance for placement. The return game will miss Whittle's explosiveness.

Keys to success: Mike Bellotti succeeded nicely in his first year after replacing Rich Brooks as coach. But, oddly, year two may be more difficult. Both coordinators—Al Borges (to UCLA) and Charlie Waters (retired for personal reasons)—have departed, so continuity seems an important issue.

Outlook: The rise of the Ducks in recent years isn't a fluke. They've gone to consecutive New Year's Day bowls, posted back-to-back nine-win seasons, and Bellotti seems to be the best young coach west of Rick Neuheisel. Even with some key personnel losses, Oregon is likely to contend again.

DUCKS DATA

Coach: Mike Bellotti (9-3, 1 year; 32-28-2 overall, 6 years).

1995 record: 9-3 (lost to Colorado in Cotton Bowl). Pac-10: 6-2/3rd.

Key losses: Jeremy Asher, LB; Troy Bailey, DE; Brian Collins, SS; Paul Jensen, LB; Cristin McLemore, WR; Alex Molden, CB; Eric Reid, G; Rich Ruhl, LB; Isaac Walker, FS; Ricky Whittle, TB.

Starters returning: Offense (8): Tony Graziani, QB, 6-3/200, Sr.; Mark Gregg, C, 6-4/270, Sr.; A.J. Jelks, FB, 6-2/246, Jr.; Tasi Malepeal, G, 6-2/340, Sr.; Dameron Ricketts, WR, 5-9/188, Sr.; David Weber, T, 6-5/270, Jr.; Paul Wiggin, T, 6-4/315, Sr.; Josh Wilcox, TE, 6-3/251, Sr. Defense (5): Derrick Barnes, OLB, 6-1/252, Sr.; Bryant Jackson, NT, 6-1/274, Sr.; Reggie Jordan, OLB, 6-3/262, Sr.; Mark Schmidt, E, 6-3/296, Sr.; Kenny Wheaton, CB, 5-9/191, Jr. Kickers (1): Joshua Smith, K, 6-1/191, Soph.

Other key returnees: Bob Baldwin, G, Sr.; Matt Belden, K/P, Soph. (RS/injury); Josh Bidwell, P, Soph.; Jeff Branson, LB, Jr.; Desmond Byrd, DE, Jr.; Jaiya Figueras, S, Jr.; Damon Griffin, WR, Jr.; Jibri Hodge, WR, Sr.; Pat Johnson, WR, Jr.; Michael Klews, OT, Soph. (RS); Curtis Moore, ILB, Jr.; Kevin Parker, TB, Soph.; Ryan Perry-Smith, QB, Sr.; Willy Rife, OT, Sr.; Blake Spence, TE, Jr.; Garth White, ILB, Jr.; LaMont Woods, CB, Sr.

Top newcomers: Josh Beckett, G, Fr. (RS); Jerry Brown, TB, Fr. (RS); LaCorey Collins, WR, Fr.; Paul Driver, C, Fr. (RS); York Frierson, CB, Soph. (Prop 48); Derien Latimer, TB, Fr. (RS); Peter Sirmon, ILB, Fr. (RS); Justin Wilcox, QB, Fr. (RS).

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Parker (46 att., 221 yds., 0 TD); Passing: Graziani (426 att., 231 comp., 10 INT, 13 TD, 2,604 yds.); Receiving: Wilcox (36 rec., 456 yds., 5 TD); Tackles: Wheaton (72); Sacks: Barnes, Jordan (7).

Site: Eugene, Ore. **Stadium:** Autzen (41,698).

Last league title won: 1994.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—at Fresno State	Oct. 12—at Stanford
Sept. 7—Nevada	Oct. 26—Washington
Sept. 14—Colorado State	Nov. 9—Arizona
Sept. 21—at Washington State	Nov. 16—California
Sept. 28—at Arizona State	Nov. 23—at Oregon State
Oct. 5—UCLA	

4. WASHINGTON

Offensive strengths: Damon Huard is gone, but the name remains at quarterback. Younger brother Brock, a prep All-American in 1994, will compete with junior Shane Fortney for the starting job. Both are capable, though inexperienced. The other skill spots are loaded, too, with tailback Rashaan Shehee, a surprise last season, and wide receivers Dave Janoski, Fred Coleman and Andre DeSaussure.

Offensive weaknesses: Every good Husky team has had a quality fullback and tight end, but those areas are question marks in '96. The line is solid but not deep, so guys like senior guard Bob Sapp need to step up.

Defensive strengths: Linebacker Ink Aleaga (227 career tackles) plays bigger than his 6-2, 225-pound frame and likely will draw comparisons to Junior Seau by year's end. Jerry Jensen, Jason Chorak and John Fiala join with Aleaga to give Washington the best linebacking corps in the league.

Defensive weaknesses: There are many holes to fill on the line and in the secondary. David Richie and Sekou Wiggs, part-timers a year ago, will be asked to make an impact on the line. Pacific transfer Nigel Burton is penciled in to replace NFL draftee Lawyer Milloy at free safety. The starting cornerback slots will be filled by new players, as well.

Special teams: Once a Huskies strength, the special teams have been spotty lately. Janoski, Coleman and Shehee are talented



UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

Washington's Ink Aleaga is the focal point of one of the best linebacking units in the nation.

PRESEASON All-PAC-10 TEAM

PLAYERS OF THE YEAR

OFFENSE

JAKE PLUMMER
QB, Arizona State

DEFENSE

DARRELL RUSSELL
DT, USC

NEWCOMERS OF THE YEAR

OFFENSE: Deltha O'Neal, RB, California
DEFENSE: Nigel Burton, S, Washington

FIRST TEAM

OFFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
WR	KEITH POOLE, Arizona State	6-2/185	Sr.
WR	NAIL BENJAMIN, California	5-11/185	Sr.
TE	JOSH WILCOX, Oregon	6-3/251	Sr.
T	JUAN ROQUE, Arizona State	6-8/320	Sr.
T	TARIK GLENN, California	6-6/345	Sr.
G	BRAD BADGER, Stanford	6-4/280	Sr.
G	BENJI OLSON, Washington	6-4/300	Soph.
C	MARK GREGG, Oregon	6-4/270	Sr.
QB	JAKE PLUMMER, Arizona State	6-2/190	Sr.
RB	RASHAAN SHEHEE, Washington	5-11/200	Jr.
RB	ANTHONY BOOKMAN, Stanford	5-9/180	Jr.

DEFENSE

E	MARK SCHMIDT, Oregon	6-3/296	Sr.
T	DARRELL RUSSELL, USC	6-4/320	Jr.
T	JOE SALAVEA, Arizona	6-4/276	Sr.
E	ANDY JACOBS, California	6-4/255	Sr.
LB	JASON CHORAK, Washington	6-4/250	Jr.
LB	INK ALEAGA, Washington	6-2/225	Sr.
LB	CHRIS DRAFT, Stanford	6-1/220	Jr.
CB	KENNY WHEATON, Oregon	5-9/191	Jr.
CB	DAYLON McCUTCHEON, USC	5-11/175	Soph.
S	MITCHELL FREEDMAN, Arizona St.	6-0/192	Soph.
S	ABDUL McCULLOUGH, UCLA	6-0/202	Sr.

SPECIALISTS

K	RYAN LONGWELL, California	6-0/180	Sr.
P	CHRIS SAILER, UCLA	5-10/188	Soph.
KR	DAMON DUNN, Stanford	5-10/175	Jr.

SECOND TEAM

OFFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
WR	RICHARD DICE, Arizona	6-2/216	Sr.
WR	BRIAN MANNING, Stanford	6-0/180	Sr.
TE	TONY GONZALEZ, California	6-6/235	Jr.
T	PAUL WIGGINS, Oregon	6-4/315	Sr.
T	SCOTT SANDERSON, Washington St.	6-7/292	Sr.
G	CHRIS BRYMER, USC	6-3/285	Jr.
G	CHAD OVERHAUSER, UCLA	6-5/290	Jr.
C	WAYNE WYATT, Arizona	6-3/296	Sr.
QB	TONY GRAZIANI, Oregon	6-3/200	Sr.
RB	SKIP HICKS, UCLA	6-0/215	Jr.
RB	DELON WASHINGTON, USC	5-11/190	Jr.

DEFENSE

E	TONY HUOT, Oregon State	6-4/261	Sr.
T	MATT KENELEY, USC	6-5/285	Sr.
T	BRANDON WHITING, California	6-3/280	Jr.
E	CARL HANSEN, Stanford	6-5/265	Jr.
LB	JAMES DARLING, Washington State	6-1/245	Sr.
LB	SCOTT VON DER AHE, Arizona St.	6-0/247	Jr.
LB	DERRICK BARNES, Oregon	6-1/252	Sr.
CB	KELLY MALVEAUX, Arizona	5-9/176	Jr.
CB	MARC WILLIAMS, Oregon State	5-9/168	Jr.
S	BRIAN KELLY, USC	6-1/190	Jr.
S	DUANE STEWART, Washington St.	6-3/208	Jr.

SPECIALISTS

K	ROBERT NYOZ, Arizona State	5-11/194	Jr.
P	MATT PEYTON, Arizona	6-1/184	Sr.
KR	PAUL GUIDRY, UCLA	5-10/175	Sr.

return men, but the coverage teams have been erratic. Kicker John Wales and punter Geoff Prince are average.

Key to success: There's enough skill-position talent to go a long way, but both lines have to mature quickly for the Huskies to navigate a difficult schedule.

Outlook: Jim Lambright did an excellent job of keeping the Huskies focused and stable during their two years on probation. The talent level isn't where it was when the school shared part of the national title in 1991, but it's good enough to be a Pac-10/bowl contender in '96.

HUSKIES DATA

Coach: Jim Lambright (21-12-1, 3 years).

1995 record: 7-4-1 (lost to Iowa in Sun Bowl). Pac-10: 6-1-1/T1st.

Key losses: Eric Battle, OT; Ernie Conwell, TE; Deke Devers, DE; Scott Greenlaw, CB; Trevor Highfield, C; Stephen Hoffmann, DT; Damon Huard, QB; Patrick Kesi, G; Lawyer Milloy, FS; Reggie Reser, CB; Richard Thomas, FB.

Starters returning: Offense (5): Fred Coleman, WR, 6-1/180, Jr.; Dave Janoski, WR, 5-10/180, Sr.; Benji Olson, G, 6-4/300, Soph.; Bob Sapp, G (moved from T), 6-5/285, Sr.; Rashaan Shehee, TB, 5-11/200, Jr. Defense (7): Ink Aleaga, ILB, 6-2/225, Sr.; Jason Chorak, OLB, 6-4/250, Jr.; Jerry Jensen, ILB, 6-2/225, Jr.; Ikaika Malloe, OLB, 5-11/200, Sr.; Tony Parrish, SS, 5-11/205, Jr.; David Richie, NT, 6-4/270, Sr.; Sekou Wiggs, NT, 6-4/270, Jr. Kickers (2): Geoff Prince, P, 5-10/185, Sr.; John Wales, K, 5-9/190, Sr.

Other key returnees: Cameron Cleveland, TE, Jr.; Tony Coats, OT, Soph.; Aaron Dalan, OT, Soph.; Reggie Davis, OLB, Soph.; Andre DeSaussure, WR, Soph.; John Fiala, LB, Sr.; Shane Fortney, QB, Jr.; Lynn Johnson, G/C, Sr.; Olin Kreutz, C (moved from G), Soph.; Jerome Pathon, WR, Jr.; Mike Reed, FB, Soph.; Josh Smith, DT, Soph.; Mostafa Sobhi, OT, Jr.; Chad Wolfe, S, Soph.

Top newcomers: Nigel Burton, S, Soph. (transfer/Pacific); Kurth Connell, DT, Fr. (RS); Corey Dillon, TB, Jr. (JC); Alex Hollowell, CB, Jr. (JC); Brock Huard, QB, Fr. (RS); Lester Towns, ILB, Fr. (RS); Jeremiah Pharms, LB/DB, Fr.; Chad Ward, OL, Fr.; Curtis Williams, TB, Fr.

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Shehee (166 att., 957 yds., 15 TD); Passing: Fortney (10 att., 4 comp., 0 INT, 1 TD, 105 yds.); Receiving: Janoski (40 rec., 657 yds., 2 TD); Tackles: Aleaga (99); Sacks: Jensen, Richie (5).
Site: Seattle. **Stadium:** Husky (72,500).
Last league title won: 1995 (tie).

SCHEDULE

Sept. 7—at Arizona State	Oct. 26—at Oregon
Sept. 14—Brigham Young	Nov. 2—at Southern California
Sept. 21—Arizona	Nov. 9—Oregon State
Oct. 5—Stanford	Nov. 16—San Jose State
Oct. 12—at Notre Dame	Nov. 23—at Washington State
Oct. 19—UCLA	

5. STANFORD

Offensive strengths: The Cardinal may be better known for producing passers than runners, but they have the league's best 1-2 tailback combo in Anthony Bookman and Mike Mitchell (a combined 1,555 yards and 32 catches last season), plus fullbacks Greg Comella (nine touchdowns) and Adam Salina. Wide receiver Brian Manning has an 18-yard average on 103 career receptions.

Offensive weaknesses: Just like last year, Stanford will start the season without an experienced quarterback. It will be either junior Tim Carey or redshirt freshman Chad Hutchinson, one of Stanford's many baseball/football stars. The line returns guard Brad Badger but must replace three veteran starters.

Defensive strengths: The Cardinal have a nice inside-outside linebacking tandem in Chris Draft (103 tackles in '95) and Brian Batson (19 career starts). End Carl Hansen had eight sacks last season. Michigan transfer Jon Ritchie, a former fullback, is expected to fill a hole at linebacker.

Defensive weaknesses: The defense's

main improvement last year was in points allowed. But opponents still ran for 184 yards a game (and 22 touchdowns). The secondary will miss corner Kwame Ellis, and Hansen was a lonely pass rusher a year ago.

Special teams: Marlon Evans (27.9-yard average) and Damon Dunn (28.4) may be the best kickoff-return tandem in the nation, and Bookman is a breakaway threat on punts. Four-year kicker Eric Abrams will be missed.

Keys to success: Pretty much the same as last year—one of the quarterbacks must step up and become a player. The defense also has to stop allowing so much yardage.

Outlook: The shift from Bill Walsh to career assistant Tyrone Willingham led the experts to expect little from Stanford last year, but Walsh obviously left some talent behind and Willingham's low-key style proved effective. Willingham loses the element of surprise after a year on the job, but as long as the defense doesn't regress, Stanford will compete nicely and perhaps earn another bowl bid.

CARDINAL DATA

Coach: Tyrone Willingham (7-4-1, 1 year).

1995 record: 7-4-1 (lost to East Carolina in Liberty Bowl). Pac-10: 5-3/4th.

Key losses: Eric Abrams, K; Jeff Buckley, OT; Mark Butterfield, QB; David Carder, DE; Kwame Ellis, CB; T.J. Gaynor, C; Mark Harris, WR; Mike Hall, ILB; John Hebert, NT; Ryan Waters, G; Jason White, DE.

Starters returning: Offense (6): Brad Badger, G, 6-4/280, Sr.; Anthony Bookman, RB, 5-9/180, Jr.; Greg Clark, TE, 6-5/260, Sr.; Brian Manning, WR, 6-0/180, Sr.; Nathan Parks, T, 6-6/303, Sr.; Adam Salina, FB, 6-3/250, Sr. Defense (7): Brian Batson, OLB, 6-4/225, Sr.; Chris Draft, ILB, 6-1/220, Jr.; Carl Hansen, E, 6-5/265, Jr.; Josh Madsen, FS, 6-2/215, Sr.; Leroy Pruitt, CB, 5-9/170, Sr.; Pete Swanson, T, 6-5/305, Sr.;

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SSF



Eliel Swinton, SS, 5-11/195, Sr. Kickers (1): Kevin Miller, P, 6-0/195, Jr.

Other key returnees: Tim Carey, QB, Jr.; Greg Comella, FB, Jr.; Damon Dunn, WR/KR, Soph. (RS); Marlon Evans, WR, Sr.; Jon Haskins, LB, Jr.; Corey Hill, CB, Jr.; Chad Hutchinson, QB, Soph.; Andre Kirwan, WR, Sr.; Andrew Kroeker, G, Jr.; Matt Motherway, G, Soph.; Mike Mitchell, RB, Sr.; Nicodemus Watts, OLB, Sr.; Geoff Wilson, OT, Jr.; Kailee Wong, DE, Jr.; Charles Young, FS, Sr.

Top newcomers: Sam Benner, DL, Fr.; Steve Coughlin, TE, Fr.; Willie Howard, DL, Fr.; Chad Hutchinson, QB, Fr.; Riall Johnson, DE/LB, Fr.; Doreen Kass, DT, Fr.; Blaine Maxfield, C, Jr. (JC); DeRonnie Pitts, WR, Fr.; Jon Ritchie, LB, Jr. (transfer/Michigan); Donnie Spragan, OLB, Soph. (transfer/Pacific).

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Bookman (181 att., 872 yds., 3 TD); Passing: Carey (4 att., 3 comp., 0 INT, 0 TD, 12 yds.); Receiving: Manning (40 rec., 616 yds., 3 TD); Tackles: Draft (103); Sacks: Hansen (8).

Site: Palo Alto, Calif. Stadium: Stanford (85,500).

Last league title won: 1992 (tie).

SCHEDULE

Sept. 7—Utah	Oct. 26—Arizona State
Sept. 14—San Jose State	Nov. 2—at UCLA
Sept. 21—at Wisconsin	Nov. 9—Southern California
Oct. 5—at Washington	Nov. 16—Washington State
Oct. 12—Oregon	Nov. 23—at California
Oct. 19—at Oregon State	

6. ARIZONA

Offensive strengths: A healthy Richard Dice leads a crew of seven returning starters. The wide receiver (101 career receptions) missed five games after tearing the ACL in his left knee but played in the season finale before having surgery. A classic big-play man, Dice and Rodney Williams (46 receptions) give the Wildcats dual exhaust.

Offensive weaknesses: The line returns intact, but it's a line that led the Pac-10 in sacks allowed (34). There's also no standout running back from a team that ranked last in the Pac-10 on the ground (104 yards per game, 2.7 per attempt, only seven TDs).

Defensive strengths: As usual, Arizona has an energetic overachiever on the line in Joe Salave'a, heir to the Wildcats' Rob Waldrop-Tedy Bruschi legacy. Cornerbacks Kelly Malveaux and Rashee Johnson were the reason for last year's big improvement in pass coverage.

Defensive weaknesses: As usual, Arizona lacks size in the front seven, which has proved troublesome against physical teams and in November. There's also a lack of experience at linebacker.

Special teams: Perhaps the best in the conference. Punter Matt Peyton's rugby-style kicks with either foot (40.6-yard average) made punting worth watching last season. Pac-10 special teams player of the year Armon Williams returns, and Dice (13.3) will return punts if healthy.

Keys to success: The most important recruit may be 64-year-old Homer Smith, the new offensive coordinator. The former UCLA and Alabama assistant is well-regarded for his teaching and for his ability to turn modest quarterbacks into big winners. Junior Brady Batten and redshirt freshman Keith Smith will compete for the job, and both are more mobile than the departed Dan White.

Outlook: Dick Tomey and basketball coach Lute Olson both win, both have white hair—and both never fully satisfy Wildcats fans. Tomey has won almost 60 percent of his games at Arizona, but he hasn't been consistent or found the way to



Senior Paul Guidry will team with his brother, Javelin, to give UCLA a solid cornerback crew.

Pasadena. The Wildcats will be improved, but with games at Washington, USC and Oregon, it may be difficult to tell.

WILDCATS DATA

Coach: Dick Tomey (60-40-4, 9 years; 123-86-7 overall, 19 years).

1995 record: 6-5, Pac-10: 4-4/T5th.

Key losses: Tedy Bruschi, DE; Charlie Camp, ILB; Chuck Osborne, DT; Mani Ott, G; Brandon Sanders, SS; Cary Taylor, WR; Dan White, QB.

Starters returning: **Offense (7):** Richard Dice, WR, 6-2/216, Sr.; Mike Lucky, TE, 6-4/220, Soph.; Ian McCutcheon, T, 6-4/285, Sr.; Frank Middleton, G, 6-4/315, Sr.; Charles Myles, FB, 5-11/233, Jr.; Gary Taylor, TB, 5-11/195, Sr.; Wayne Wyatt, C, 6-3/296, Sr. **Defense (6):** Chester Burnett, ILB, 5-10/220, Jr.; Rashee Johnson, CB, 6-0/180, Sr.; Kelly Malveaux, CB, 5-9/176, Jr.; Joe Salave'a, T, 6-4/276, Sr.; Jimmy Spotted, DE/OLB, 6-2/235, Jr.; Van Tuinei, E, 6-4/265, Sr. **Kickers (2):** Mark McDonald, K, 6-1/183, Soph.; Matt Peyton, P, 6-1/184, Sr.

Other key returnees: Brady Batten, QB, Jr.; Daniel Greer, DT, Soph.; Ron Holmes, WR, Soph.; Cai McCray, DT, Sr.; Mike Metzler, TE, Sr.; Mikal Smith, SS, Soph.; Mike Szlauko, ILB, Jr.; Tevete Usu, G, Sr.; Willie Walker, OT, Sr.; Armon Williams, OLB, Jr.; Rodney Williams, WR, Jr.

Top newcomers: Leon Callen, RB, Fr.; Orlege Jenkins, QB, Fr.; Joe Johnson, WR, Jr. (JC); Jeremy McDaniel, WR, Jr. (JC); Yusef Scott, G, Fr. (RS); Keith Smith, QB, Fr. (RS); Chima Ugwu, DT, Soph. (transfer/JC).

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Taylor (177 att., 714 yds., 2 TD); Passing: Batten (60 att., 26 comp., 3 TDs, 2 INT, 362 yards); Receiving: Williams (46 rec., 587 yds., 4 TD); Tackles: Burnett (58); Sacks: Tuinei (3.5).

Site: Tucson, Ariz. Stadium: Arizona (57,803).

Last league title won: 1993 (tie).

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—Texas-El Paso	Oct. 26—Oregon State
Sept. 7—at Iowa	Nov. 2—at California
Sept. 14—Illinois	Nov. 9—at Oregon
Sept. 21—at Washington	Nov. 16—UCLA
Oct. 5—Washington State	Nov. 23—Arizona State
Oct. 12—at Southern California	

7. UCLA

Offensive strengths: Quarterback Cade McNown had raw and ripe moments last season as a true freshman. The lefthander's best talents are footwork and tenacity. Wide receivers Derek Ayers and Jim McElroy give the passing game a head start.

Offensive weaknesses: Skip Hicks is slated to replace Karim Abdul-Jabbar at tailback, but he has had injuries to both knees and hasn't shown he's a gamer. The line returns just one starter and will de-

pend on some young players making immediate contributions. UCLA hasn't had a dominating tight end or fullback since the 1980s. **Defensive strengths:** UCLA shifted to a 4-3 out of necessity last year. The defense will be more varied this season (look for some five-back sets), and its best players, Abdul McCullough and Phillip Ward, will return to their best positions, strong safety and outside linebacker, respectively. The Guidry brothers, Paul and Javelin, will start at cornerback.

Defensive weaknesses: The lack of a consistent pass rush hurt the Bruins last year (opponents averaged 247 passing yards a game), and the personnel is largely unchanged. The line, led by Travis Kirschke, is on the small side.

Special teams: It's a mixed bag. Paul Guidry averaged 15.1 yards on punt returns and McElroy 24.8 yards on kickoffs, but the coverage teams were soft. Punter Chris Sailer averaged 42.3 yards. The Bruins are still waiting for Bjorn Merten (22-of-38 in field-goal attempts the past two seasons) to return to his 1993 All-American form (21-of-26).

Keys to success: Hicks has to stay healthy or redshirt freshman Ryan Roques must step up in place of Abdul-Jabbar. Defensively, the Bruins have to be more consistent.

Outlook: Jim Harrick, meet Bob Toledo. Eight years ago, UCLA went for a low-profile local guy in basketball and eventually won a national title, and it is intent on doing likewise in football. Replacing Terry Donahue isn't like succeeding John Wooden, but it won't be as easy as some Bruins fans think. Especially this year, with road games at Tennessee, Michigan, Oregon, Washington and Arizona.

BRUINS DATA

Coach: Bob Toledo (first year; 27-36 overall, 6 years).

1995 record: 7-5 (lost to Kansas in Aloha Bowl). Pac-10: 4-4/T5th.

Key losses: Karim Abdul-Jabbar, TB; Tommy Bennett, OLB; James Christensen, G; Mike Flanagan, C; Kevin Jordan, WR; George Kase, NG; Teddy Lawrence, CB; Ted Nwoke, SS; Jonathan Ogden, OT; Brian Richards, TE; Mike Rohme, OT; Grady Strath, DL.

Starters returning: **Offense (5):** Cheyane Caldwell, FB, 6-1/231, Soph.; Mike Grieb, TE, 6-3, 240, Soph.; Cade McNown, QB, 6-1/207, Soph.; Chad Overhauser, G, 6-5/290, Jr.; Eric Scott, WR, 6-0/178, Jr. **Defense (6):** Paul Guidry, CB, 5-10/175, Sr.; Danjuan Magee, E, 6-1/245, Jr.; Abdul McCullough, SS (moved from OLB), 6-0/202, Sr.; Phillip Ward, OLB (moved from DE), 6-2/226, Sr.; Shaun Williams, FS, 6-1/202, Jr.; Brian Willmer, MLB, 6-2/240, Jr. **Kickers (2):** Bjorn Merten, K, 6-0/201, Sr.; Chris Sailer, P, 5-10/188, Soph. **Other key returnees:** Derek Ayers, WR, Sr.; Jamal Clark, TE, Sr.; Anthony Cobbs, S, Jr.; Javelin Guidry, CB, Jr.; Skip Hicks, TB, Jr. (RS/knee); Ramogi Huma, OLB, Soph.; Travis Kirschke, DT, Sr.; Darren McClure, G, Sr.; Jim McElroy, WR, Jr.; Brad Melsby, WR, Soph.; Andy Meyers, OT, Soph.; Jason Nevadomsky, DE, Sr.; Chad Sauter, G, Jr.; Shawn Stuart, C, Soph.; Vae Tata, DE, Jr.

Top newcomers: Damien Allen, DB, Fr.; Dan Cotti, OT, Jr. (JC); Gabe Creacion, TE, Fr.; Kris Farris, OT, Fr. (RS); Durrell Price, RB, Fr.; Ryan Roques, TB, Fr. (RS); Damon Smith, DT, Soph.; Rosco Zamano, ILB, Fr.

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: McNown (71 att., 311 yds., 5 TD); Passing: McNown (245 att., 122 comp., 8 INT, 7 TD, 1,698 yds.); Receiving: Ayers (23 rec., 310 yds., 1 TD); Tackles: McCullough (100); Sacks: McCullough (3).

Site: Los Angeles. Stadium: Rose Bowl (100,089).

Last league title won: 1993 (tie).

SCHEDULE

Sept. 7—at Tennessee	Oct. 26—at California
Sept. 14—Northeast Louisiana	Nov. 2—Stanford
Sept. 28—at Michigan	Nov. 9—Washington State
Oct. 5—at Oregon	Nov. 16—at Arizona
Oct. 12—Arizona State	Nov. 23—Southern California
Oct. 19—at Washington	

8. CALIFORNIA

Offensive strengths: In yet another version of the West Coast offense, former Cal aide Steve Mariucci brings one with him from the Green Bay Packers. He didn't bring Brett Favre with him, but quarterback Pat Barnes, tight end Tony Gonzalez and receivers Na'il Benjamin (111 career catches) and Bobby Shaw (38 catches, 6 touchdowns last season) aren't bad.

Offensive weaknesses: Although Tarik Smith has some flash, the Bears don't have a prototype back or the kind of depth the West Coast offense needs. True freshman Deltha O'Neal will be given every opportunity to play right away. Tackle Tarik Glenn (6-6, 345) will be asked to show he has pro potential in addition to pro size.

Defensive strengths: Former coach Keith Gilbertson's blitzkrieg philosophy has been dumped in favor of a basic alignment run by former 49ers assistant Tom Holmoe. Fundamentals are in. Last year's Cal defense set a record for tackles for losses but allowed almost 200 yards per game rushing. Linemen Andy Jacobs and Brandon Whiting are solid.

Defensive weaknesses: You don't lose first-round NFL draft picks like Duane Clemons and Regan Upshaw and not feel it. There's an absence of experience almost everywhere, especially at linebacker. There were only four seniors on the two-deep last spring.

Special teams: The Bears were fundamentally better a year ago, ranking last in the league in net punting, kick returns and kickoff coverage. Mariucci once coached special teams, so that should help. Benjamin owns a 9.3-yard career punt return average. Ryan Longwell is a good two-way kicker.

Keys to success: Patience and optimism come immediately to mind. The program had grown so negative and paranoid under

Gilbertson, who blamed outside distractions for the team's woes in recent years. Fortunately for Mariucci, he inherits a nice nucleus of offensive talent.

Outlook: Cal's spring prospectus states that Mariucci will bring a merger of the best talents of Bill Walsh and Vince Lombardi with him to Berkeley. Most Bears fans will settle for Mariucci being a little better than Gilbertson, at least in year one.

BEARS DATA

Coach: Steve Mariucci (first year).

1995 record: 3-8. Pac-10: 2-6/T8th.

Key losses: Je'Rod Cherry, DB; Duane Clemons, DE (declared for NFL draft); Dante DePaola, S; Maurice Johnson, LB; Ben Lynch, C; Reynard Rutherford, TB; James Stallworth, LB; Regan Upshaw, DE (declared for NFL draft).

Starters returning: **Offense (9):** Pat Barnes, QB, 6-4/210, Sr.; Na'il Benjamin, WR, 5-11/185, Sr.; Tarik Glenn, T, 6-6/345, Sr.; Tony Gonzalez, TE, 6-6/235, Jr.; Jeremy Newberry, C (moved from G), 6-5/285, Soph.; Drake Parker, G, 6-4/290, Jr.; Bobby Shaw, WR, 6-1/180, Jr.; Todd Stewart, T, 6-6/290, Sr.; Johnny Tavake, FB, 6-0/235, Sr. **Defense (5):** Kevin Devine, CB, 5-11/175, Sr.; Andy Jacobs, E, 6-4/255, Sr.; Brent Jones, T, 6-3/280, Sr.; Marlon McWilson, SS (moved from LB), 6-2/215, Jr.; Brandon Whiting, T, 6-3/280, Jr. **Kickers (1):** Ryan Longwell, K/P, 6-0/180, Sr.

Other key returnees: Caleb Brown, G/C, Soph. (RS/wrist); Sean Bullard, TE, Sr.; Evan Collins, DE, Sr.; Demeane Douglas, WR, Soph.; Chris Easley, DT, Jr.; Justin Flagg, LB, Soph.; Derrick Gardner, CB, Soph.; Rasheed Hibler, LB, Jr.; Andre Rhodes, LB, Jr.; George Roberts, DT, Jr.; Marquis Smith, S, Soph.; Tarik Smith, TB, Jr.; Josh Trowbridge, OLB, Soph.; Kevin Swillis, DE, Soph.

Top newcomers: Matt Beck, ILB, Fr. (RS); Jerry DeLoach, DE, Fr. (RS); Pete DeStefano, FS, Fr. (RS); Justin Oakes, LB, Fr. (RS); Deltha O'Neal, RB, Fr.; Sekou Sanyika, OLB, Fr. (RS); Kato Serranga, CB, Jr. (transfer/Pacific).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Smith (74 att., 391 yds., 2 TD); **Passing:** Barnes (362 att., 197 comp., 11 INT, 17 TD, 2,685 yds.); **Receiving:** Benjamin (52 rec., 595 yds., 5 TD); **Tackles:** McWilson (69); **Sacks:** Jacobs (4).

Site: Berkeley, Calif. **Stadium:** Memorial (75,200).

Last league title won: 1975.

SCHEDULE

Sept. 7—at San Jose State	Oct. 26—UCLA
Sept. 14—San Diego State	Nov. 2—Arizona
Sept. 21—Nevada	Nov. 9—at Arizona State
Sept. 28—Oregon State	Nov. 16—at Oregon
Oct. 5—at Southern California	Nov. 23—Stanford
Oct. 19—at Washington State	

THE PRESSURE'S ON

The (desert) heat will focus on ASU's Plummer

Jake Plummer has everything a quarterback could want on his college resume: a great efficiency rating, 28 consecutive starts with a full season to go, and an envious touchdown-to-interception ratio.

Everything except team success. In those 28 starts, Arizona State is 13-15. The Bruce Snyder era, expected to be an instant hit when the coach arrived from Cal in 1992, has been a disappointment.

The only constant has been Plummer, who has thrown for 6,051 yards, 41 touchdowns and 25 interceptions. Last season, he was named the Pac-10's first-team quarterback despite the Sun Devils' 6-5 record.

"I could have gone to other schools and probably been to a bowl game," says Plummer, a 6-2 senior from Boise, Idaho. "But I probably wouldn't have been a three-year starter and received the experience I have. Playing at this level for four years has definitely made me a better quarterback."

Plummer doesn't do one thing exceptionally well, but he does most things very well. He has a strong, accurate arm, can throw on the run and earned his nickname, "Snake," through his uncanny ability to avoid pass rushers.

The difference between Plummer then and Plummer now is patience. He is less likely to scramble and more likely to step up in the pocket to find the open receiver. He also has improved his foot and hip mechanics. The type of offense ASU runs also helps.

"It's helped to play in a pro-style offense because I've had to learn a lot about reads," he says. "I've watched a lot of film of Troy Aikman and the way he anticipates what a defense will do. I take a lot of pride in a high completion rate."

Poise and leadership have been Plummer attributes from the beginning, no more so than during the second half of last season.

After a 3-8 record in 1994, ASU began '95 with three losses. But over the last six games, Plummer and the offense averaged 32.5 points a game, won four times and lost the other two games by a total of five points. In those four victories, Plummer completed 68 percent of his passes. He did not throw a fourth-quarter interception all season. That turnaround has many observers believing the Sun Devils will be in the hunt for the Pac-10 title. Plummer, of course, will have to be the leader. ♦

—BOB KEISSER



Plummer



California's Andy Jacobs had four sacks last year but will be counted on for more this season.

9. WASHINGTON STATE

Offensive strengths: Sophomore quarterback Ryan Leaf played well late last season (one interception in 97 attempts), and Chad Carpenter and Bryant Thomas head a large group of quick receivers. The Cougars, potentially, could have their best passing game since the Drew Bledsoe era.

Offensive weaknesses: Frank Madu is gone at running back, and there's no one on the roster who looks capable of replacing his 870 yards. The top returnee, Miguel Meriwether, had 146. Highly touted JC transfer Michael Black may be the man. There's also a lack of experience on the line and at fullback and tight end. Look for Washington State to use a lot of multiple-wide receiver sets.

Defensive strengths: Linebacker James Darling (13 tackles for loss) is one of the Pac-10's best defensive players. The Cougars' tradition of good, deep secondaries continues as three starters return along with 1994 starter Ray Jackson and Nebraska transfer Tray Crayton.

Defensive weaknesses: The loss of Dwayne Sanders, Darryl Jones and Chris Hayes will take some of the shine off the Cougars' impressive run defense of the past few years. That trio combined for 23 tackles for loss in '95. Two sophomores will man the tackle spots. Coaches are high on end Dorian Boose, a JC transfer.

Special teams: The Cougars will miss punter George Martin (43.2 yards) and punt returner Jay Dumas. Kicker Tony Truant didn't show much leg a year ago on field goals. The special teams have a bad habit of inconsistent play.

Keys to success: If Leaf plays as well as he did at the end of last season, the Cougars could be one of the Pac-10's surprise teams. But the losses along the defensive line are major.

Outlook: The Cougars always are a hard team to project. Except for Southern California, Mike Price's teams have been competitive against everyone in the Pac-10 and get their share of quality upsets and surprise bowl invitations. There is enough returning talent in the passing game to make the Cougars dangerous in '96.

COUGARS DATA

Coach: Mike Price (38-41, 8 years; 84-85 overall, 16 years).

1995 record: 3-8, Pac-10: 2-6/T8th.

Key losses: Jay Dumas, WR; Chris Hayes, LB; Darryl Jones, DT; Frank Madu, RB; George Martin, P; Marc McCloskey, C; Eric Moore, TE; Dwayne Sanders, DE; John Soukanec, OT; Brian Walker, CB.

Starters returning: **Offense (6):** Chad Carpenter, SE, 6-0/191, Sr.; Ryan Leaf, QB, 6-5/228, Soph.; Jason McEndoo, G, 6-6/297, Jr.; Scott Sanderson, T, 6-7/292, Sr.; Bryant Thomas, WR, 6-1/202, Jr.; Cory Withrow, C, 6-4/260, Jr. **Defense (7):** James Darling, LB, 6-1/245, Sr.; Shane Doyle, E, 6-3/240, Jr.; Derek Henderson, FS, 6-0/200, Sr.; Shad Hinchin, CB, 5-11/177, Sr.; Gary Holmes, T, 6-7/310, Soph.; Johnny Nansen, LB, 6-0/222, Sr.; Duane Stewart, SS, 6-3/208, Jr. **Kickers (1):** Tony Truant, K, 5-8/180, Sr.

Other key returnees: Zach Edwards, OT, Jr. (RS); Ray Jackson, S/CB, Jr. (RS); David Knuff, TE, Sr.; Ryan McShane, OT, Jr.; Shawn McWashington, WR, Jr.; Miguel Meriwether, TB, Soph.; Brandon Moore, LB, Jr.; Delmar Morais, DT, Soph.; Adesola Moronkola, CB, Soph.; Mike Sage, G, Soph.; Shawn Tims, WR, Jr.

Top newcomers: Jeff Banks, P, Jr. (JC); Steve Birnbaum, QB, Fr. (RS); Michael Black, RB, Jr. (JC); Dorian Boose, DE, Jr. (JC); Bryan Chiu, C/G, Sr. (transfer/Pacific); Tray Crayton, CB, Soph. (transfer/Nebraska); Chris Jackson, WR, Jr. (JC); Love Jefferson, TE, Jr. (transfer/Pacific); Kevin McKenzie, WR, Jr. (JC).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Meriwether (30 att., 146 yds., 2 TD); **Passing:** Leaf (97 att., 52 comp., 1 INT, 4 TD, 654 yds.); **Receiving:** Carpenter (32 rec., 415 yds., 2 TD); **Tackles:** Darling (83); **Sacks:** Darling (1.5). **Site:** Pullman, Wash. **Stadium:** Martin (40,000). **Last league title won:** 1930.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—at Colorado	Oct. 19—California
Sept. 7—at Temple	Oct. 26—at Southern California
Sept. 21—Oregon	Nov. 9—at UCLA
Sept. 28—San Jose State	Nov. 16—at Stanford
Oct. 5—at Arizona	Nov. 23—Washington
Oct. 12—at Oregon State	

10. OREGON STATE

Offensive strengths: Quarterbacks Tim Alexander, Don Shanklin and Rahim Muhammad have starting experience. The job is Alexander's to lose, but whoever plays will have to improve as a passer. The wishbone attack has been replaced by an option attack with more passing. It will be directed by former Cal offensive coordinator Denny Schuler.

Offensive weaknesses: The Beavers had no threat at running back a year ago and also fumbled 39 times, and the running backs again are questionable. Halfback Shayzar Hawkins is coming off a foot injury and transfer fullback Akili King, who gained 883 yards as a sophomore at Army, is injury-prone. At receiver, the returning players have made a total of six career catches.

Defensive strengths: The offense was supposed to rattle opponents, but it was the five-back defense that really bothered teams. The secondary, led by Marc Williams, is exceptionally deep.

Defensive weaknesses: Tackle Tom Holmes and linebacker Kane Rogers, two of Oregon State's top three tacklers last year, are gone. Depth at linebacker and an overall lack of experience are major concerns.

Special teams: A lot of games were lost here. The Beavers were poor everywhere on special teams, from their 37.5-yard net punting average to kicker Randy Lund going 5-of-14 on field-goal attempts of 30 yards or longer. JC All-American Matt Bryant gets a shot at the kicking job.

Keys to success: Staying optimistic will be important. Even for a program as familiar with losing as Oregon State, last year's 1-10 mark was unexpected. The gains of Jerry Pettibone's first four years are in danger of being lost if the Beavers take the path well-traveled.

Outlook: Six of the 10 losses were by 10 points or less, but danger signs exist. The offense is being changed from the wishbone to the option despite a seeming lack of personnel to make it work. Defensive coordinator Rocky Long is gone, and the '96 recruiting class was JC heavy. Seems like old times.

BEAVERS DATA

Coach: Jerry Pettibone (11-42-1, 5 years; 44-74-2 overall, 11 years).

1995 record: 1-10, Pac-10: 0-8/10th.



Free safety Armon Hatcher is a key performer in Oregon State's five-defensive back scheme.

Key losses: Darin Borter, G; Tim Camp, OT; Chris Cross, WR; Tom Holmes, DT; Ahmani Johnson, OLB; David Kiepe, DE; Phil Lafler, OT; Mark Offord, RB; Cameron Reynolds, RB; J.D. Stewart, FB; Reggie Tongue, FS.

Starters returning: **Offense (4):** Jamie Critchlow, C, 6-2/276, Sr.; Larry Ramirez, T, 6-6/284, Soph.; Don Shanklin, QB, 5-11/195, Sr.; Brad Thompson, G, 6-3/324, Sr. **Defense (7):** Inoke Breckterfield, T, 5-11/264, Soph.; Larry Bumpus, SS, 6-1/196, Jr.; Armon Hatcher, FS, 6-0/202, Soph.; Andrae Holland, CB, 5-10/174, Soph.; Tony Huot, E, 6-4/259, Sr.; Brian Rogers, ILB, 6-3/247, Soph.; Marc Williams, ROV, 5-9/168, Sr. **Kickers (2):** Randy Lund, K, 6-0/186, Jr.; Doug Stuckey, P, 6-0/196, Sr.

Other key returnees: Tim Alexander, QB, Soph.; Buster Elahee, FS, Jr. (RS); Grant Forman, OT, Sr.; Sylvester Green, WR, Sr.; Charles Hatcher, G, Jr.; Shayzar Hawkins, RB, Sr. (RS/injury); Tom Huthoefer, DE, Sr.; Bryan Jones, FS, Soph.; Darron Kirkman, FB, Sr.; Joe Kuykendall, TE, Soph.; Bryan Ludwick, ILB, Sr.; Nathan McAtee, ILB, Jr.; Rahim Muhammad, QB, Sr.; Jarrod Owens, T, Sr.; DeShawn Williams, RB, Soph.

Top newcomers: Kyle Bidgood, OT, Jr. (JC); Jamil Braithwaite, LB, Jr. (JC); David Brim, DE, Fr. (RS); Matt Bryant, K, Jr. (JC); Darrol Camp, DT, Fr. (RS); Cobbe Davis, WR, Fr. (RS); Mat Davis, RB, Fr. (RS); Akili King, TB, Sr. (transfer/Army); Tony Marshall, OT, Jr. (JC); Bob McKane, DE, Soph. (JC); Micah Moore, FB, Fr. (RS); Freddie Perez, OT, Jr. (JC); Joe Robertson, WR, Soph. (JC); Sione Tupou, DE, Jr. (JC).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Alexander (109 att., 439 yds., 3 TD); **Passing:** Alexander (76 att., 25 comp., 4 INT, 0 TD, 400 yds.); **Receiving:** Green (4 rec., 57 yds., 0 TD); **Tackles:** M. Williams (71); **Sacks:** M. Williams (5). **Site:** Corvallis, Ore. **Stadium:** Parker (35,362). **Last league title won:** 1964.

SCHEDULE

Sept. 7—Montana	Oct. 26—at Arizona
Sept. 14—at Southern California	Nov. 2—Arizona State
Sept. 21—at Baylor	Nov. 9—at Washington
Sept. 28—at California	Nov. 15—Northern Illinois
Oct. 12—Washington State	Nov. 23—Oregon
Oct. 19—Stanford	

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SCOUTING THE PAC-10

Ascending: Arizona State. It had better ascend; otherwise the school's five-year commitment to Bruce Snyder will have been for naught. After being cut short in scholarship numbers, the Sun Devils are flush again and seem poised for a return to the first division of the conference and their first bowl since 1987.

Descending: UCLA. Terry Donahue's 20-year tenure as coach was marked by record success in virtually every respect: 98 conference wins, eight bowl victories and a winning record against USC. But the program has been in a bit of a slide in the '90s, and Bob Toledo was a strange choice as Donahue's replacement.

Nightmare schedule: UCLA. Toledo, whose previous Division I-A experience was at Pacific (14-30 from 1979-82), will get a quick baptism as the Bruins' coach with road games at Tennessee and Michigan in the first three weeks and games at Oregon, Washington and Arizona in league play.

Dream schedule: Arizona State. The Sun Devils open the season with five consecutive home games and leave the state only three times. Granted, one of those home games is against Nebraska, but the other non-league home games are against North Texas and Division I-A newcomer Boise State. Their toughest league games—Washington, Oregon and USC—are at home.

Best matchup of the year: UCLA's games at Tennessee and Michigan have appeal, but USC vs. Notre Dame has tradition. The Irish's 13-year unbeaten streak against the Men of Troy adds even more luster to the November 30 game.

Worst matchup of the year: San Jose State appears on conference schedules four times, but the UCLA-Northeast Louisiana game on September 14 will excite few people.

Bowl bound: USC, Arizona State, Oregon and Washington are cinches. Stanford, Arizona, UCLA and Washington State will straddle the six-win bubble.

Biggest shoes to fill: USC receiver Keyshawn Johnson's. He wasn't the No. 1 pick in the NFL draft for nothing. Chris Miller and Larry Parker will find it impossible to make Trojans fans forget the acrobatic and clutch pass-catching talents of Johnson, who set a Pac-10 record for receptions in a season (102) last year.

Most overrated player: USC tailback Delon Washington. He had five 100-yard games as a sophomore last year, but Trojans coaches think a few other backs on the roster are better suited to the USC running-back image.

Most underrated player: Arizona State wide receiver Keith Poole. In a conference that always seems flush with good receivers, this guy doesn't get nearly as much acclaim as he should.

Best coach: USC's John Robinson. Robinson may not be quite as good as he was, but he still gets the job done, especially when recruiting. Oregon's Mike

HONOR ROLL

Best offensive backfield:	USC.
Best wide receivers:	California.
Best offensive line:	Arizona State.
Best defensive line:	USC.
Best linebackers:	Washington.
Best secondary:	USC.
Best special teams:	Arizona.
Hardest hitter:	Arizona State's Mitchell Freedman.
Best backup quarterback:	Oregon's Ryan Perry-Smith.
Best pro prospects:	Mitchell Freedman, S, Arizona State, and Darrell Russell, DT, USC.
Best game-day atmosphere:	Washington.

RANKING THE RECRUITING

Top recruit in parentheses

1. USC (OL Travis Claridge). It was another strong year for the Trojans, who wound up in most recruiting Top 10s.
2. Washington (TB Curtis Williams).
3. UCLA (RB Durrell Price).
4. Arizona (QB Ortege Jenkins).
5. Arizona State (QB Ryan Kealy).
6. Oregon (WR LaCorey Collins).
7. Stanford (DE/OLB Riall Johnson).
8. California (RB Deltha O'Neal).
9. Washington State (LB/DE Greg Dupree).
10. Oregon State (K Matt Bryant).



Delon Washington had a good season last year but isn't particularly a favorite of USC coaches.

Bellotti deserves mention. He is considered one of the best young coaches in the country.

Best staff: It's a tossup between USC, on the strength of Mike Riley's offensive ability, and Arizona, where Dick Tomey has a very deep staff.

Coach on the hot seat: Arizona State's Bruce Snyder. You could make a case for UCLA's Toledo, Arizona's Tomey and Oregon State's Jerry Pettibone, but Snyder is 21-23 in four years with the Sun Devils, including 3-8 in 1994. If he doesn't

make a bold step this year, he's done.

Best bets: The league race will be close. Six teams have won or tied for the Pac-10 title in the past four years, and different schools have gone to the past four Rose Bowls. ... Since Washington earned a share of the national title in 1991, no conference team has finished higher than 10th in the final AP poll. ... A top underclassmen will leave the league early for the NFL. The Pac-10 leads the nation in underclassmen selected in the first round of the NFL draft since the practice became widespread in 1990. Washington's Lawyer Milloy, UCLA's Karim Abdul-Jabbar and Cal's Regan Upshaw and Duane Clemons were the latest Pac-10 standouts to leave school with a year of eligibility left. Upshaw and Clemons were first-rounders.

Odds and ends: Eight of the league's 10 teams have gone to a bowl since 1990. The only ones that haven't: Arizona State and Oregon State. ... With Terry Donahue in the TV booth with CBS, determining the new dean of league coaches depends on how you do the scoring. This is John Robinson's 11th year at USC, but it has come in seven- and four-year chunks. It's Bruce Snyder's 10th year as a Pac-10 coach, but the first five were at Cal and the next five at ASU. Tomey has the longest consecutive streak at one school with nine at Arizona. ... Three returning receivers have more than 100 career catches: Cal's Na'il Benjamin (111), Stanford's Brian Manning (103) and Arizona's Richard Dice (101). Poole has 93, and Oregon tight end Josh Wilcox has 75. ... Oregon signed Bellotti to a five-year contract worth \$270,000 a year after last season, when Bellotti's name popped up on a few shopping lists. ... USC is in some probationary hot water again. The latest charge: that players were directed, by the athletic department, into classes that they either did not attend or did not turn in the required work but still received an "A" grade. Some of the football players enrolled in the class included Keyshawn Johnson, Kyle Wachholtz and Leonard Green. USC had investigated the report internally and found nothing. The school was working with Pac-10 and NCAA investigators on the second probe. Green, by the way, was considering dropping out of school because of academic and health problems (poor vision). ... Washington needs two more home wins for 300 at Husky Stadium. Only five other Division I-A schools have won as many games on their current home fields (Georgia Tech, Tennessee, USC, Ohio State and Michigan). ... Tomey needs one win to become the winningest coach in Arizona history. He is tied with Pop McKale with 60. ... The league is loaded with two-sport stars. Cal tight end Tony Gonzalez is the most notable, having played in the past two NCAA basketball tournaments.

—BOB KEISSER

1. FLORIDA STATE

Offensive strengths: Warrick Dunn, the only two-time 1,000-yard rusher in Florida State history, is among the early favorites for the Heisman Trophy. His backup, Rock Preston, had nearly 1,000 all-purpose yards last season. But the running backs are no more impressive than the wide receivers. Andre Cooper and E.G. Green, the only 1,000-yard receivers in the ACC, combined for 25 touchdowns. Redshirt freshman Randy Moss, though, may be better than both. As if that weren't enough, Dunn caught 43 passes last season.

Offensive weaknesses: Florida State lost three first-team All-ACC linemen in tackle Jesus Hernandez, guard Lewis Tyre and center Clay Shiver. The rebuilt line must protect an untested quarterback in junior Thad Busby, a first-year starter.

Defensive strengths: Ends Peter Boulware and Reinard Wilson ranked 1-2 in the ACC in sacks, and tackle Andre Wadsworth was second on the team in tackles, a rarity for a down lineman. When healthy, Daryl Bush is one of the top linebackers in the country.

Defensive weaknesses: Last year, FSU didn't have a first-team All-ACC defensive back for the first time in its four seasons in the league. No Seminole had more than three interceptions. All four starters return, but is that good news?

Special teams: Punter Sean Liss did not arrive in Tallahassee with nearly the fanfare of kicker and fellow senior Scott Bentley, but Liss has been much more consistent. As for the return game, the Seminoles have ran back only one kick for a touchdown in the past two years. Dee Feaster may take one back this season.

Key to success: The Seminoles gave up 537 and 498 yards, respectively, in their losses to Florida and Virginia. Notre Dame had 425 yards in a 31-26 loss to FSU in the Orange Bowl. FSU must prove it can stop good teams to win the national title.

Outlook: It comes down to two games: a midseason trip to Miami and a November 30 home date with Florida. If the Seminoles win both, the national title could be theirs.

SEMINOLES DATA

Coach: Bobby Bowden (186-49-4, 20 years; 259-81-4 overall, 30 years).

1995 record: 10-2 (beat Notre Dame in Orange Bowl). ACC: 7-1/T1st.

Key losses: Jesus Hernandez, OT; Danny Kanell, QB; Tyrant Marion, DE; Todd Rebol, OLB; Orpheus Royce, DT; Clay Shiver, C; Lewis Tyre, G.

Starters returning: **Offense (7):** Chad Bates, G, 6-3/269, Sr.; Andre Cooper, WR, 6-2/194, Sr.; Warrick Dunn, TB, 5-9/178, Sr.; Todd Fordham, T, 6-5/292, Sr.; E.G. Green, WR, 5-11/185, Jr.; Melvin Pearsall, TE, 6-1/242, Jr.; Clarence "Pooh Bear" Williams, FB, 6-1/286, Jr. **Defense (8):** Daryl Bush, MLB, 6-2/230, Jr.; Byron Capers, CB, 6-1/194, Jr.; Sam Cowart, OLB (likely to miss season with knee injury), 6-3/239, Sr.; Sean Hamlet, FS, 6-0/218, Sr.; Robert Hammond, SS, 6-3/185, Jr.; Samari Rolle, CB, 6-1/170, Jr.; Andre Wadsworth, NT, 6-4/270, Jr.; Reinard Wilson, E, 6-2/245, Sr. **Kickers (2):** Scott Bentley, K, 5-11/178, Sr.; Sean Liss, P, 6-4/220, Sr.

Other key returnees: Khalid Abdullah, FB, Soph.; Peter Boulware, DE, Jr.; Thad Busby, QB, Jr.; James Colzie, CB, Sr.; Vernon Crawford, OLB, Sr.; Henri Crockett, OLB, Sr.; Dee Feaster, TB/KR/PR, Soph.; Lamont Green, LB, Soph.; Dexter Jackson, DB, Soph.; Sean Key, FS, Soph.; Kevin Long, C, Jr.; Marcus Long, G, Sr.; Wayne Messam, WR, Sr.; Julian Pittman, DT, Jr.; Rock Preston, TB, Jr.; Connell Spain, DT, Sr.; Tra Thomas, OT, Jr. **Top newcomers:** Laveranues Coles, RB, Fr.; Vannez Gooch,

ACC

Conference Rank: 5

By DOUG DOUGHTY

PREDICTIONS

1. FLORIDA STATE
2. VIRGINIA
3. CLEMSON
4. NORTH CAROLINA
5. GEORGIA TECH
6. MARYLAND
7. N.C. STATE
8. DUKE
9. WAKE FOREST

RB, Fr.; Walter Jones, G, Jr. (RS/JC); Dan Kendra, QB, Fr. (RS); Randy Moss, WR, Fr. (RS); Kwaesi Palmer, LB, Fr.; Theon Rackley, OLB, Fr. (RS); Corey Simon, DT, Soph. (transfer/Georgia); Larry Smith, DE, Fr. (RS); Peter Warrick, WR, Fr. (RS).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Dunn (166 att., 1,242 yds., 13 TD); **Passing:** Busby (59 att., 38 comp., 1 INT, 4 TD, 571 yds.); **Receiving:** Cooper (71 rec., 1,002 yds., 15 TD); **Tackles:** Cowart (115); **Sacks:** Cowart (10). **Site:** Tallahassee, Fla. **Stadium:** Doak S. Campbell (77,500). **Last league title won:** 1995 (tie).

SCHEDULE

Sept. 7—Duke	Nov. 2—at Georgia Tech
Sept. 19—at N.C. State	Nov. 9—Wake Forest (at Orlando)
Sept. 28—North Carolina	Nov. 16—Southern Miss
Oct. 5—Clemson	Nov. 23—Maryland (at Miami)
Oct. 12—at Miami	Nov. 30—Florida
Oct. 26—Virginia	



Ronde Barber, who has 12 career interceptions, is the lone returning starter in the Cavs' secondary.

2. VIRGINIA

Offensive strengths: Tailback Tiki Barber had an ACC-high 265 carries last season, putting to rest any questions about his durability, and rushed for a school-record 1,397 yards. Germane Crowell, with seven touchdown catches in two years, has a chance to become a big-time receiver. Fullback Darrell Medley and tight end Walt Derey are underrated complementary players.

Offensive weaknesses: The Cavaliers will break in a new quarterback—fifth-year senior Tim Sherman or sophomore Aaron Brooks—behind a line that returns two starters (guard Jeremy Raley and center Tom Locklin). Injuries and graduation forced Virginia to play one spring scrimmage without a scholarship receiver.

Defensive strengths: Outside linebackers Jamie Sharper and James Farrior combined for 217 tackles last year after accumulating 218 in 1994. They are entering their fourth and third years as starters, respectively. Todd White and Duane Ashman head an improving line. Cornerback Ronde Barber (Tiki's twin), with 12 interceptions in two years, is a two-time All-ACC selection.

Defensive weaknesses: Virginia has had 20 or more interceptions in three consecutive seasons, but a rebuilt secondary has that streak in jeopardy. Anthony Poindexter, who spent most of his freshman year at linebacker, will be one of the safeties. The other could be one of seven newcomers expected to get a look.

Special teams: Virginia had both first-team All-ACC kicking specialists last year in kicker Rafael Garcia and punter Will Brice. Garcia has led the conference in field goals the past two seasons, and only 36 of 131 Brice punts have been returned over the same span. Tiki Barber is one of the league's most dangerous punt returners.

Key to success: Despite having a different No. 1 quarterback at the start of every season, Virginia has enjoyed considerable success in the 1990s. The Cavaliers can only hope that the transition is as smooth with Sherman or Brooks this season.

Outlook: The Cavaliers' fate could be determined in the last three weeks of the season, when they face 1995 bowl teams Clemson, North Carolina and Virginia Tech. Virginia, the first ACC team to beat Florida State, certainly can't expect to sneak up on the Seminoles on October 26 in Tallahassee.

CAVALIERS DATA

Coach: George Welsh (98-63-3, 14 years; 153-109-4 overall, 23 years).

1995 record: 9-4 (beat Georgia in Peach Bowl). ACC: 7-1/T1st.

Key losses: Tony Agee, DT; Demetrius Allen, WR; Jason Augustino, OT; Joe Crocker, CB; Percy Ellsworth, S; Mike Groh, QB; Chris Harrison, OT; Patrick Jeffers, WR; Skæet Jones, LB; Paul London, S; John Slocum, G.

Starters returning: **Offense (5):** Tiki Barber, TB, 5-10/195, Sr.; Walt Derey, TE, 6-5/248, Sr.; Tom Locklin, C, 6-4/282, Sr.; Darrell Medley, FB, 6-2/235, Sr.; Jeremy Raley, G, 6-3/270, Sr. **Defense (6):** Duane Ashman, E, 6-4/268, Sr.; Ronde Barber, CB, 5-10/180, Jr.; James Farrior, LB, 6-2/229, Sr.; Jon Harris, E, 6-8/258, Sr.; Jamie Sharper, OLB, 6-3/238, Sr.; Todd White, T, 6-2/265, Sr. **Kickers (2):** Will Brice, P, 6-5/204, Sr.; Rafael Garcia, K, 5-11/195, Sr.

Other key returnees: Trevor Britton, G, Jr.; Aaron Brooks, QB, Soph.; Derick Byrd, WR, Jr.; Germane Crowell, WR, Jr.; Tony Dingle, DT, Soph.; Robert Hunt, G/OT, Soph.; Doug

Karczewski, OT, Jr.; Patrick Kerney, DE, Soph.; Charles Kirby, FB, Jr.; Sam McKiver, DB, Sr.; Andre McNeal, LB/DB, Soph.; Bryan Owen, WR, Jr.; Anthony Poindexter, S, Soph.; Wall Rainer, LB, Soph.; Tim Sherman, QB, Sr.; Johnny Shivers, DT, Soph.; Terrence Wilkins, TB, Soph.; Joe Williams, DB, Jr.

Top newcomers: Marcus Bullett, DB, Fr. (RS); Wally Elegebe, DB, Fr. (RS); Evan Hunt, OT, Fr. (RS); Thomas Jones, RB, Fr.; Andreas Karellis, LB, Fr. (RS); Noel LaMontagne, G/OT, Fr. (RS); Mark Lindsey, G, Fr. (RS); Dillon Taylor, LB, Fr. (RS); Shannon Taylor, LB, Fr. (RS).

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Barber (265 att., 1,397 yds., 14 TD); Passing: Sherman (17 att., 11 comp., 0 INT, 2 TD, 182 yds.); Receiving: Crowell (27 rec., 371 yds., 5 TD); Tackles: Farrior (122); Sacks: Harris (8).

Site: Charlottesville, Va. **Stadium:** Scott (40,000).

Last league title won: 1995 (tie).

SCHEDULE

Sept. 7—Central Michigan	Oct. 26—at Florida State
Sept. 14—Maryland	Nov. 2—at Duke
Sept. 21—at Wake Forest	Nov. 9—Clemson
Sept. 28—Texas	Nov. 16—North Carolina
Oct. 5—at Georgia Tech	Nov. 29—at Virginia Tech
Oct. 19—N.C. State	

3. CLEMSON

Offensive strengths: Tailback Raymond Priestler, who began his college career as a fullback, broke a school record with 1,322 rushing yards in '95. He is joined by one of the country's premier fullbacks in Emory Smith, Emmitt's younger and heavier brother who scored 14 touchdowns. One-time tailback Antwan Wyatt has turned into a quality receiver.

Offensive weaknesses: All of Clemson's offensive weaknesses were exposed in a 41-0 loss to Syracuse in the Gator Bowl. Nealon Greene is the only full-time starter among returning ACC quarterbacks, but he failed to throw for even 100 yards in four of the Tigers' last seven games.

Defensive strengths: Linebacker Anthony Simmons made 150 tackles as a true freshman last year when no other Tiger had more than 96 and no other returning player had more than 53. Safeties Leomont Evans and Brian Dawkins are gone from a secondary that led the ACC in pass defense, but cornerback Dexter McCleon is coming off an outstanding junior year, when he shared the ACC lead with 13 pass breakups.

Defensive weaknesses: Clemson needs to find a pass rusher to replace Patrick Sapp, the former quarterback who led the team in sacks with a relatively modest 5½. Tackle Raymond White and outside linebacker Brett Williams join Simmons as the only returning starters in the front seven for the Tigers.

Special teams: The return game is in good hands with Wyatt, the only Division I-A player to rank in the top 15 nationally in punt and kickoff returns. But the Tigers must replace kicker Jeff Sauve, who was 15-of-20 on field-goal attempts, and punter Chris McNally, who averaged 42.7 yards per kick.

Key to success: A ball-control offense is critical as Clemson's young defense matures. Greene was intercepted only eight times last year and the Tigers ranked 19th in Division I-A in turnover margin.

Outlook: Clemson was the hottest team in the ACC, with five victories in a row, before the Gator Bowl debacle against Syracuse. It appears the Tigers have turned the corner after two losing seasons in three years (1992-94), but their margin for error is slim.



Tar Heels tailback Leon Johnson ran for 963 yards and caught 54 passes last season.

TIGERS DATA

Coach: Tommy West (14-10, 2 years; 18-17 overall, 3 years). **1995 record:** 8-4 (lost to Syracuse in Gator Bowl). **ACC:** 6-2/3rd.

Key losses: Carlos Curry, NT; Brian Dawkins, SS; Leomont Evans, FS; Robert Jackson, OT; Andy McCrorey, ILB; Chris McNally, P; Trevor Putnam, C; Patrick Sapp, OLB; Jeff Sauve, K; LaMarick Simpson, DT; Will Young, G.

Starters returning: **Offense (8):** Jim Bundren, T, 6-3/275, Jr.; Nealon Greene, QB, 5-11/190, Jr.; Tony Horne, WR, 5-11/170, Jr.; Raymond Priestler, TB, 6-1/220, Jr.; Glenn Rountree, G, 6-3/285, Jr.; Emory Smith, FB, 6-0/235, Sr.; Joe Woods, WR, 5-9/160, Sr.; Antwan Wyatt, FL/KR, 5-11/190, Sr. **Defense (6):** Andy Ford, CB, 5-11/180, Sr.; Peter Ford, CB, 5-11/180, Sr.; Dexter McCleon, CB, 5-10/190, Sr.; Anthony Simmons, ILB, 6-1/205, Soph.; Raymond White, T, 6-3/255, Jr.; Brett Williams, OLB, 6-4/250, Sr. **Kickers:** None.

Other key returnees: Howard Bartley, OLB, Soph. (RS/injury); Eric Bradford, DT, Sr.; Andre Carter, SS, Sr.; Kenya Crooks, WR, Jr.; Anthony Downs, TB, Jr.; Antwan Edwards, S, Soph.; Chris Jones, ILB, Soph.; Kevin Laird, P, Soph.; Lamont Pegues, TB, Jr.; Tony Plantin, DT, Jr.; Holland Postell, OT, Soph.; Bernard Randolph, DT, Sr. (RS/broken leg); Jamie Trimble, C, Sr.; Mond Wilson, ILB, Jr.

Top newcomers: Rahim Abdullah, OLB, Fr. (RS); Carl Baker, WR, Fr. (RS/injury); Terry Bryant, DL, Fr.; Jason Gamble, OL, Jr. (JC); Billy Luckie, QB, Fr. (RS); Idris Price, LB, Fr.; Trevor Pryce, DT, Jr. (transfer/Michigan); Ryan Romano, K/P, Fr.; Brandon Streeter, QB, Fr. (RS).

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Priestler (238 att., 1,322 yds., 6 TD); Passing: Greene (202 att., 116 comp., 8 INT, 10 TD, 1,537 yds.); Receiving: Wyatt (45 rec., 683 yds., 5 TD); Tackles: Simmons (150); Sacks: Simmons (3½).

Site: Clemson, S.C. **Stadium:** Memorial (81,473).

Last league title won: 1991.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—at North Carolina	Oct. 19—Georgia Tech
Sept. 7—Furman	Nov. 2—Maryland
Sept. 21—at Missouri	Nov. 9—at Virginia
Sept. 28—Wake Forest	Nov. 16—N.C. State
Oct. 5—at Florida State	Nov. 23—South Carolina
Oct. 12—at Duke	

4. NORTH CAROLINA

Offensive strengths: Leon Johnson finished fifth, behind four 1,000-yard runners, in the ACC rushing race last season. He also broke a school record with 54 receptions. Tight end Freddie Jones is an All-ACC type who should get more passes thrown his way in a new offensive scheme. Wide receiver Octavus Barnes, provided he can return from reconstructive knee surgery, has all-league talent.

Offensive weaknesses: The passing

game is a question mark with Barnes' injury and the departure of quarterback Mike Thomas, who broke UNC's single-season passing record last year. One-time heir apparent Oscar Davenport also had knee surgery, leaving the job in the hands of JC transfer Chris Keldorf.

Defensive strengths: North Carolina has the ACC's top linebacking unit—and one of the best in the nation—in Kivuusama Mays, Brian Simmons and James Hamilton. Tackle Rick Terry and end Greg Ellis, who combined for 15 sacks in '95, are ready to emerge from Marcus Jones' shadow.

Defensive weaknesses: Not many UNC led the ACC in total defense with an average of 267.3 yards, almost 60 fewer than the next-best team. But the Heels also were last in interceptions (eight). They'll miss their leading tackler in the secondary, Sean Boyd, as well as pass-breakup leader Fuzzy Lee.

Special teams: Hidden yardage killed the Tar Heels in 1995, when they finished last in the ACC in punting and had just one field goal of more than 40 yards. Marcus Wall, the only ACC player to return a kickoff for a touchdown last year, will be missed.

Key to success: UNC must improve its turnover ratio. The Tar Heels finished 105th of 108 Division I-A teams in that department last year. Thomas was responsible for much of that with an ACC-high 19 interceptions, but UNC also forced fewer turnovers (16) than any team in the league.

Outlook: A quick start is critical. The Heels face fellow would-be contender Clemson in their first game, and the Tigers have won 13 of the past 15 games in the series, including a 17-10 win last year at Clemson.

TAR HEELS DATA

Coach: Mack Brown (49-43-1, 8 years; 66-71-1 overall, 12 years).

1995 record: 7-5 (beat Arkansas in Carquest Bowl). **ACC:** 4-4/75th.

Key losses: Russell Babb, OT; Sean Boyd, FS; Marcus Jones, DT; Fuzzy Lee, CB; Mike Thomas, QB; Marcus Wall, WR.

Starters returning: **Offense (8):** Octavus Barnes, WR, 6-1/182, Jr.; Mike Hobbgood, T, 6-4/275, Jr.; Brian Honeycutt, G, 6-3/270, Sr.; Leon Johnson, TB, 6-1/210, Sr.; Freddie Jones, TE, 6-5/255, Sr.; Jeff Saturday, C, 6-3/280, Jr.; Byron Thomas, T, 6-4/330, Sr.; Chris Watson, FB, 5-10/230, Sr.

Defense (8): Terry Billups, CB, 5-10/170, Jr.; Omar Brown, FS, 5-10/192, Jr.; Russell Davis, E, 6-4/260, Soph.; Greg Ellis, E, 6-6/260, Jr.; James Hamilton, OLB, 6-5/235, Sr.; Kivuusama Mays, MLB, 6-4/240, Jr.; Brian Simmons, OLB, 6-4/230, Jr.; Rick Terry, T, 6-4/290, Sr. **Kickers:** None.

Other key returnees: Darrin Ashford, WR, Sr.; Na Brown, WR, Soph.; Oscar Davenport, QB, Soph.; Vonnice Holliday, DT, Jr.; Jomo Legins, SS, Soph.; Jonathan Linton, TB, Jr.; Reggie Love, CB, Jr.; Keith Newman, OLB, Soph.; Chuckie Parquet, WR, Soph.; Mike Pringley, DE, Soph.; Teto Simpson, DE, Soph.; L.C. Stevens, WR, Soph.; Chris Welch, K, Sr.; Greg Williams, SS/WR, Jr.

Top newcomers: Dre' Bly, CB/KR, Fr. (RS); Ryan Carley, C, Fr. (RS); Greg Harris, WR/SS, Fr. (RS); Jon Hall, DT/OT, Fr. (RS); Chris Keldorf, QB, Jr. (JC); Ricco McCain, DE/OLB, Fr. (RS); Allen Mogridge, FB, Fr. (RS); Robert Nixon, OT/DT, Fr. (RS); Jason Peace, QB, Fr. (RS); Brandon Spoon, LB, Fr.

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Johnson (225 att., 963 yds., 12 TD); Passing: Davenport (22 att., 12 comp., 1 INT, 1 TD, 151 yds.); Receiving: Johnson (54 rec., 408 yds., 0 TD); Tackles: Mays (138); Sacks: Terry (8).

Site: Chapel Hill, N.C. **Stadium:** Kenan (52,000).

Last league title won: 1980.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—Clemson	Oct. 26—at Houston
Sept. 7—at Syracuse	Nov. 2—N.C. State
Sept. 21—Georgia Tech	Nov. 9—Louisville
Sept. 28—at Florida State	Nov. 16—at Virginia
Oct. 5—at Wake Forest	Nov. 23—at Duke
Oct. 12—Maryland	

PRESEASON All-ACC TEAM

PLAYERS OF THE YEAR

OFFENSE



WARRICK DUNN
RB, Florida State

DEFENSE



ANTHONY
SIMMONS
LB, Clemson

NEWCOMERS OF THE YEAR

OFFENSE: Randy Moss, WR, Florida State
DEFENSE: Trevor Pryce, T, Clemson

FIRST TEAM

OFFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
WR	ANDRE COOPER, Florida State	6-2/194	Sr.
WR	RANDY MOSS, Florida State	6-4/210	Fr.
TE	FREDDIE JONES, North Carolina	6-5/255	Sr.
T	CURTIS MCGEE, Georgia Tech	6-5/285	Sr.
T	JIM BUNDREN, Clemson	6-3/275	Jr.
G	CHAD BATES, Florida State	6-3/269	Sr.
G	CHAD MELITA, Duke	6-3/290	Jr.
C	JEFF SATURDAY, North Carolina	6-3/280	Jr.
QB	THAD BUSBY, Florida State	6-3/220	Jr.
RB	WARRICK DUNN, Florida State	5-9/178	Sr.
RB	TIKI BARBER, Virginia	5-10/195	Sr.

DEFENSE

E	REINARD WILSON, Florida State	6-2/245	Sr.
T	TODD WHITE, Virginia	6-2/265	Sr.
E	GREG ELLIS, North Carolina	6-6/260	Jr.
LB	DARYL BUSH, Florida State	6-2/230	Jr.
LB	ANTHONY SIMMONS, Clemson	6-1/205	Soph.
LB	JAMIE SHARPER, Virginia	6-3/238	Sr.
LB	BRIAN SIMMONS, North Carolina	6-4/230	Jr.
CB	RONDE BARBER, Virginia	5-10/180	Jr.
CB	NATHAN PERRYMAN, Georgia Tech	5-9/180	Sr.
S	ANTHONY POINDEXTER, Virginia	6-1/202	Soph.
S	KENNY HARRIS, N.C. State	6-2/193	Sr.

SPECIALISTS

K	RAFAEL GARCIA, Virginia	5-11/195	Sr.
P	WILL BRICE, Virginia	6-5/204	Sr.
KR	ANTWUAN WYATT, Clemson	5-11/190	Sr.

SECOND TEAM

OFFENSE

WR	OCTAVUS BARNES, North Carolina	6-1/182	Jr.
WR	ANTWUAN WYATT, Clemson	5-11/190	Sr.
TE	MARK THOMAS, N.C. State	6-5/222	Jr.
T	DARRYL GILLIAM, Maryland	6-5/321	Jr.
T	TODD FORDHAM, Florida State	6-5/292	Sr.
G	WALTER JONES, Florida State	6-5/290	Jr.
G	KEN CELAJ, Georgia Tech	6-4/285	Jr.
C	SEAMUS MURPHY, N.C. State	6-4/266	Jr.
QB	NEALON GREENE, Clemson	5-11/190	Jr.
RB	RAYMOND PRIESTER, Clemson	6-1/220	Jr.
RB	LEON JOHNSON, North Carolina	6-1/210	Sr.

DEFENSE

E	DUANE ASHMAN, Virginia	6-4/268	Sr.
T	JOHNNIE HICKS, Maryland	6-2/281	Jr.
E	PETER BOULWARE, Florida State	6-5/255	Jr.
LB	RON ROGERS, Georgia Tech	6-1/230	Jr.
LB	RATCLIFF THOMAS, Maryland	6-1/238	Sr.
LB	JAMES FARRIOR, Virginia	6-2/229	Sr.
LB	KIVUUSAMA MAYS, North Carolina	6-4/240	Jr.
CB	CHAD SCOTT, Maryland	6-1/196	Sr.
CB	DEXTER McCLEON, Clemson	5-10/190	Sr.
S	ROBERT HAMMOND, Florida State	6-3/185	Jr.
S	OMAR BROWN, North Carolina	5-10/192	Jr.

SPECIALISTS

K	SCOTT BENTLEY, Florida State	5-11/178	Sr.
P	SEAN LISS, Florida State	6-4/220	Sr.
KR	DEE FEASTER, Florida State	5-9/175	Soph.

5. GEORGIA TECH

Offensive strengths: Georgia Tech rushed for 2,321 yards last season, more than double its total (1,145) from the year before. C.J. Williams, who began his Tech career as a defensive back, ranked among the ACC rushing leaders for most of the season. Charles Wiley might be the best pure runner among ACC fullbacks and could see time at tailback. Three-year starting tackle Curtis McGee takes over as leader of the line. Harvey Middleton and Derrick Steagall are nice bookend receivers.

Offensive weaknesses: Few ACC teams have as little experience returning at quarterback as Tech. Its 1995 backup, Brandon Shaw, attempted only 14 passes. Shaw or redshirt freshman Joe Hamilton will miss the protection departed center Michael Cheever provided on the line.

Defensive strengths: Inside linebackers Keith Brooking and Ron Rogers finished 1-2 in the league in tackles and were major factors in the Yellow Jackets' first-place ranking in the ACC (and fourth in Division I-A) against the run. Nathan Perryman shared the ACC lead in pass breakups with 13 and ranks with the ACC's best cover men.

Defensive weaknesses: The Jackets' best lineman last year, nose tackle Al Jackson, isn't returning for his final season of eligibility. And Perryman will need help in the secondary with the departure of safety Ryan Stewart and unheralded cornerback Nick Ferguson.

Special teams: Rodney Williams averaged 48.5 net yards on four punts against

Georgia but the Yellow Jackets still finished eighth in the ACC in net punting. Dave Frakes was a pleasant surprise after taking over as the kicker, hitting 10-of-15 field-goal attempts.

Key to success: The Yellow Jackets need some threat of a passing game to maximize their strong running game. The coaching staff was pleased with the poise shown by quarterbacks Shaw and Hamilton during the spring.

Outlook: The Yellow Jackets dropped a pair of last-minute, one-point games last year to Arizona (20-19) and Georgia (18-17). Tech always is going to play Georgia, but soft non-conference games against Central Florida and Navy should make for an improved record.

YELLOW JACKETS DATA

Coach: George O'Leary (6-8, 2 years).

1995 record: 6-5. ACC: 5-3/4th.

Key losses: Michael Cheever, C; Donnie Davis, QB; Jason Dukes, OT; Nick Ferguson, CB; Al Jackson, NT; Ryan Stewart, FS; Cedric Zachery, SE.

Starters returning: **Offense (6):** Grant Baynam, TE, 6-5/247, Sr.; Ken Celaj, G, 6-4/285, Jr.; Curtis McGee, T, 6-5/285, Sr.; Harvey Middleton, SE, 6-0/187, Jr.; Michael Minter, G, 6-5/310, Sr.; Derrick Steagall, FL, 6-0/202, Sr.; Charles Wiley, FB, 6-1/210, Soph.; C.J. Williams, TB, 6-1/202, Jr. **Defense (8):** Keith Brooking, ILB, 6-3/225, Jr.; Jimmy Clements, OLB, 6-3/219, Sr.; Mike Dee, FS, 6-4/190, Sr.; Ralph Hughes, E, 6-4/246, Jr.; Jermaine Miles, E, 6-5/261, Sr.; Nathan Perryman, CB, 5-9/180, Sr.; Ron Rogers, ILB, 6-1/230, Jr.; Derrick Shepherd, T, 6-3/277, Jr. **Kickers (2):** Dave Frakes, K, 6-1/194, Jr.; Rodney Williams, P, 6-1/175, Soph.

Other key returnees: Jason Bostic, CB, Soph.; Patrick Bradford, NT, Jr.; Ron Hardin, FB, Jr. (RS/knee); Steve Jackson, OT, Sr.; Gary Joseph, SS, Jr.; Yoel Molina, OT, Sr. (RS/injury); Phillip Rogers, TB, Soph.; Brandon Shaw, QB, Soph.; DeShaun Simmons, DE, Soph.; Kofi Smith, CB, Soph.; Jesse Tarplin, OLB, Soph.; Brian Wilkins, FS, Soph.; Dan Witherspoon, NG, Jr. **Top newcomers:** Quincy Carter, QB, Fr.; Chris Edwards, LB,

Fr.; Abe Fernandez, C, Fr. (RS); Joe Hamilton, QB, Fr. (RS); Kevin Knapp, G, Fr.; Craig Page, C, Soph. (transfer/Louisville); Nate Stimson, DT, Soph. (transfer/Miami, Fla.); Reggie Wilcox, CB, Fr.

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Williams (245 att., 1,138 yds., 12 TD); Passing: Shaw (14 att., 5 comp., 1 INT, 0 TD, 29 yds.); Receiving: Middleton (31 rec., 444 yds., 3 TD); Tackles: Brooking (146); Sacks: Clements (4).
Site: Atlanta. **Stadium:** Grant Field (46,000).
Last league title won: 1990.

SCHEDULE

Sept. 7—at N.C. State	Oct. 2—Central Florida
Sept. 14—Wake Forest	Nov. 2—Florida State
Sept. 21—at North Carolina	Nov. 14—at Maryland
Sept. 28—Duke	Nov. 23—Navy
Oct. 5—Virginia	Nov. 30—at Georgia
Oct. 19—at Clemson	

6. MARYLAND

Offensive strengths: Buddy Rodgers established himself as an ACC-caliber running back last season, when he rushed for 718 yards in a pass-oriented offense. With the Terps' move to the I-formation this year, he will run behind a veteran line that features 6-5, 321-pound tackle Darryl Gilliam and three other returning starters. Wide receiver Geroy Simon holds ACC records for receptions in a game and season.

Offensive weaknesses: Maryland finished last in the ACC in total offense and had a four-game stretch at midseason when it scored one touchdown. Quarterback Brian Cummings, effective early, did not maintain that form. In fact, he didn't even play in the last three games.

Defensive strengths: The Terps have made dramatic improvement since giving up 6,083 yards, a Division I-A record, in 1993. That figure was down to 3,855 by last season and only three ACC teams allowed

fewer touchdowns. Tackle Johnnie Hicks has star potential on a defense that is as deep as it is talented. Linebacker Ratcliff Thomas is a tackling machine, and Chad Scott and A.J. Johnson may be the best cornerback tandem in the ACC.

Defensive weaknesses: Linebackers Tim Brown and Mike Settles, who finished 2-3 behind Thomas in tackles last year, will be missed. Of the ACC's top five rushing teams, four gained more than 200 yards against the Terps and the fifth, Florida State, passed for 496.

Special teams: Maryland was a true mystery in this area last season, finishing first in the ACC in punt returns but last in kickoff returns. Joe O'Donnell doesn't attempt many field goals but is fairly accurate: 17-of-21 over the past two seasons. Scott Milanovich finished his career as the best punter in school history.

Key to success: Maryland, which led the ACC in passing three times between 1990-93, won't go anywhere this year if it can't put points on the board. The Terps were seventh in the ACC in passing, eighth in rushing and last in total offense in '95.

Outlook: A 6-5 record was viewed as a turning point for the Mark Duffner regime, which had been 9-24 in its first three seasons. The Terps were in bowl contention last year and have the same kind of team this season.

TERRAPINS DATA

Coach: Mark Duffner (15-29, 4 years; 75-33-1 overall, 10 years).

1995 record: 6-5, ACC: 4-4/T5th.

Key losses: Tim Brown, ILB; Jermaine Lewis, WR; Scott Milanovich, QB/P; Mark Motley, OT; Darrick Rather, FS; Mike Settles, OLB.

Starters returning: **Offense (8):** Brian Cummings, QB, 5-11/205, Jr.; Darryl Gilliam, T, 6-5/321, Jr.; Erik Greenstein, C, 6-2/300, Sr.; Aaron Henne, G, 6-5/299, Sr.; Mancel Johnson, WR, 6-1/180, Sr.; Buddy Rodgers, RB, 5-11/231, Jr.; Geroy Simon, WR, 6-0/183, Sr.; Pat Ward, G, 6-5/308, Jr.

Defense (8): Lamont Gore, FS, 6-1/212, Sr.; Eric Hicks, E, 6-6/248, Jr.; Johnnie Hicks, T, 6-2/281, Jr.; A.J. Johnson, CB, 5-10/170, Sr.; Chad Scott, CB, 6-1/196, Sr.; Ratcliff Thomas, LB, 6-1/238, Sr.; Al Wallace, E, 6-5/244, Sr.; Tim Watson, T, 6-4/276, Jr. **Kickers (1):** Joe O'Donnell, K, 5-10/184, Sr.

Other key returnees: Henry Baker, FS, Jr.; Eric Barton, LB, Soph.; Mario Chavez, FB, Sr.; John Feagull, OT, Soph.; Andre Hentz, SS, Sr.; Paul Jackson, CB, Soph.; Bruce James, WR, Soph.; Anthony Jenkins, DE, Sr.; Eric Ogbogu, DE, Jr.; Kendall Ogle, OLB, Soph.; Ryan Rezelie, OT, Soph.; Brian Underwood, RB, Jr.

Top newcomers: Damone Boone, RB, Fr.; Tim Brown, TE, Jr. (JC); Delbert Cowsette, DT, Fr. (RS); Troy Davidson, WR, Fr. (JC); Darnell Eatmon, RB, Fr. (RS); Derrick Johnson, S, Fr. (RS); Erwin Lyght, OLB, Fr. (RS); Brad Messina, G, Fr. (RS); Marcus Patrick, CB, Jr. (JC); Sean Starnes, P, Fr.; Jamie Wu, DT, Fr. (RS).

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Rodgers (158 att., 718 yds., 8 TD); Passing: Cummings (166 att., 98 comp., 4 INT, 5 TD, 1,193 yds.); Receiving: Simon (54 rec., 440 yds., 0 TD); Tackles: Thomas (103); Sacks: Ogbogu (7). **Site:** College Park, Md. **Stadium:** Byrd (48,000).

Last league title won: 1985.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—Northern Illinois	Oct. 19—Wake Forest
Sept. 7—Alabama-Birmingham	Oct. 26—at Duke
Sept. 14—at Virginia	Nov. 2—at Clemson
Sept. 26—at West Virginia	Nov. 14—Georgia Tech
Oct. 5—N.C. State	Nov. 23—FSU (at Miami)
Oct. 12—at North Carolina	

7. NORTH CAROLINA STATE

Offensive strengths: Tremayne Stephens' career did not take off as many had expected it would after his fast finish

in 1994, but his per-carry average of 4.6 yards compared favorably with the top backs in the conference. Fullback Rod Brown is among the ACC's best at his position, as is tight end Mark Thomas.

Offensive weaknesses: Sophomore quarterback Jose Laureano had an early baptism when Terry Harvey battled an assortment of injuries, but he did not distinguish himself to the point where all questions have been answered about his future. The Wolfpack must replace the heart of its line as well: center Kenneth Redmond and guards Steve Keim and Jonathan Redmond.

Defensive strengths: Linebackers Morocco Brown and Ron Melnik had respectable seasons in their first year as starters by finishing 1-2 on the team in tackles. N.C. State's top returning defender is strong safety Kenny Harris. Keep an eye on tackle George Williams.

Defensive weaknesses: The departure of cornerback Ricky Bell, who made himself available for the NFL draft, did not help a defense that finished last in the ACC. Opponents completed 67.8 percent of their passes against N.C. State, which did not have a player in the top 10 in the league in sacks.

Special teams: Marc Primanti helped soften the loss of All-ACC kicker Steve Videtich by going 11-of-13 on field-goal attempts. Punter Jay Dukes was decent, especially for a non-roster player going into preseason drills.

Key to success: The Wolfpack must play better at home. State was only 1-5 at home last season, 0-5 after a 33-16 victory over Marshall in the opener. That followed a '94 season in which the Wolfpack went 5-1 in Raleigh and 9-3 overall.

Outlook: N.C. State is coming off its first losing season since 1987. A temporary setback? Maybe. But in the eyes of some, the Wolfpack has been overachieving for some time. A winning record in 1996 would be an accomplishment.

WOLFPACK DATA

Coach: Mike O'Cain (19-16, 3 years).

1995 record: 3-8, ACC: 2-6/T7th.

Key losses: Ricky Bell, CB (declared for NFL draft); Mike Guffie, WR; Mike Harrison, DT; Terry Harvey, QB; Steve Keim, G; Jonathan Redmond, G; Kenneth Redmond, C; Jon Rissler, DE; James Walker, FS.

Starters returning: **Offense (6):** Terrence Boykin, T, 6-7/257, Sr.; Rod Brown, FB, 6-0/230, Sr.; Tom Dombalis, T, 6-4/271, Sr.; Jimmy Grissett, WR, 5-11/190, Sr.; Tremayne Stephens, TB, 5-11/187, Jr.; Mark Thomas, TE, 6-5/222, Jr. **Defense (5):** Brad Collins, E, 6-6/257, Jr.; Kenny Harris, SS, 6-2/193, Sr.; Ron Melnik, ILB, 6-1/224, Sr.; Hassan Shamsid-Deen, CB, 5-8/170, Soph.; George Williams, T, 6-3/284, Jr. **Kickers (2):** Jay Dukes, P, 5-10/189, Soph.; Marc Primanti, K, 5-7/158, Sr.

Other key returnees: Greg Addis, WR, Jr.; Morocco Brown, MLB, Jr.; Rod Brown, FB, Sr.; Bobbie Cotten, LB, Soph.; Duan Everett, OLB, Jr.; Lonnie Gilbert, G, Jr.; Torry Holt, WR, Soph.; Mark Lawrence, DT, Sr.; Jose Laureano, QB, Soph.; Seamus Murphy, C, Jr.; Rodney Redd, CB, Soph.; Alex Santos, G, Soph.; Clayton Simon, DE, Soph. (RS/injury); Devon Smith, TE, Soph.; Darwin Walker, DE, Soph.; Damon Wyche, FS, Jr. **Top newcomers:** Jamie Barnette, QB, Fr. (RS); Todd Boyle, OT, Fr. (RS); Patrick Dunn, G, Fr. (RS); Colin Harris, QB, Jr. (JC); Lloyd Harrison, CB, Fr. (RS); Jeff Kuh, DT, Fr.; Kevin Mitchell, LB, Fr. (RS); Tim Ramseur, LB, Fr. (RS); Rahshon Spikes, TB, Fr.

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Stephens (186 att., 849 yds., 5 TD); Passing: Laureano (50 att., 28 comp., 1 INT, 1 TD, 355 yards); Receiving: Grissett (37 rec., 570 yds., 6 TD); Tackles: Brown (92); Sacks: Collins (3).

Site: Raleigh, N.C. **Stadium:** Carter-Finley (45,000).

Last league title won: 1979.

THE PRESSURE'S ON

After standing in line, FSU QB ready to step up

Thad Busby realizes there will be times this fall when he comes out of games in the third quarter. After all, that's how he got his playing time the past two seasons. But there will be other times when he faces pressure unlike that experienced by any other ACC quarterback.

"That's part of the reason for coming to Florida State," says Busby, a fourth-year junior preparing to make his debut as the starter. "Everybody wants to play in those close games. Personally, I think I play better when it means something."



Busby

Busby didn't do poorly last year when it didn't mean a lot. Playing in parts of six regular-season games, he was 38-of-59 for 571 yards and four touchdowns as the backup to Danny Kanell.

"I knew coming in here that I'd pretty much have to stand in line," says Busby, a 6-3, 220-pounder who was a high school All-American at Pace (Fla.) High, near Pensacola. "That's been the tradition here, from Peter Tom Willis to Casey Weldon to Charlie Ward and even with Dan—they all had to wait their turn."

Much of Busby's playing time came in lopsided victories over Duke (70-26), N.C. State (77-17) and Maryland (59-17). Coach Bobby Bowden made a point of continuing to run the Seminoles' no-huddle offense even with his backup players, something that didn't sit well with some foes.

"Hey, if you put in your No. 2 and (No.) 3 offense and you run your normal plays and you're still scoring, I don't think that's running up the score," Busby says. "We're just trying to get work, too."

Kanell and Busby were the only quarterbacks to attempt a pass last season for FSU even though its 1995 recruiting class included the nation's premier quarterback prospect, Dan Kendra. Kendra, whose father played for Bowden at West Virginia, was redshirted.

"It's his job to lose," Bowden says of Busby. "He runs better than Kanell; he's got a very strong arm with a quick release."

Busby's test will come in the fall, maybe not against an ACC foe but when Florida State visits Miami and later entertains Florida. "There's a lot of pressure on the quarterback because we've had such a great line of quarterbacks," Busby says. "Plus, our fans expect us to win the national championship every year. I've just got to try and not let that stuff get to me."

—DOUG DOUGHTY

SCHEDULE

Sept. 7—Georgia Tech	Nov. 2—at North Carolina
Sept. 19—Florida State	Nov. 9—Duke
Sept. 28—at Purdue	Nov. 16—at Clemson
Oct. 5—at Maryland	Nov. 23—Wake Forest
Oct. 12—Alabama	Nov. 30—at East Carolina
Oct. 19—at Virginia	

8. DUKE

Offensive strengths: Laymarr Marshall was a pleasant surprise last season for a Blue Devils team that traditionally has had problems moving the ball on the ground. In his first year as a starter, Marshall rushed for 708 yards and 13 touchdowns in a conference where nobody had more than 14 rushing touchdowns. Guards Chad Melita and Patrick Mannelly will open many of the holes. Marc Wilson and Corey Thomas (a combined 92 receptions) are proven receivers.

Offensive weaknesses: Of the 815 passes attempted by the Blue Devils over the past two seasons, Spence Fischer accounted for 784. Fischer finished his career as the No. 2 passer in ACC history. His replacement? It might be junior Dave Green, who attempted eight passes last season.

Defensive strengths: Injuries and disciplinary problems turned last season into a virtual washout for linebacker Billy Granville, a second-team All-ACC selection in 1994. A re-energized Granville is back for his senior year, and Duke feels it has an emerging star in safety Tawambi Settles.

Defensive weaknesses: Duke had the ACC's worst defense by far in 1995, 60 yards poorer (486.2 yards per game) than the conference's next most charitable unit. The Blue Devils were young—at one point they had six freshmen on the field at Virginia—and they're still young.

Special teams: Punter John Krueger hasn't received the attention he deserves because he happened to come along at the same time as Virginia's Will Brice and FSU's Sean Liss. Kicker Tom Cochran, who was 14-of-18 on field-goal attempts, will be hard to replace.

Key to success: Duke traditionally has been able to move the football, but the lack of a proven quarterback makes that less of a given this year. The defense should be improved, but not good enough to carry Duke against an early schedule that includes four road games in the first five outings.

Outlook: Third-year coach Fred Goldsmith says he feels like he's starting over with a roster that includes 44 true or redshirt freshmen among the 85 scholarship players. The Blue Devils' best chances for victory—Army, Navy, N.C. State and Wake Forest—are on the road.

BLUE DEVILS DATA

Coach: Fred Goldsmith (11-12, 2 years; 36-50-1 overall, 8 years).
1995 record: 3-8. ACC: 1-7/8th.

Key losses: Orlando Adewale, DE; Carlos Bagley, ILB; Tom Cochran, K; Jeroen Egge, C; Ray Farmer, FS; Spence Fischer, QB; Bernard Holsley, NG; James Kirkland, OLB; Jon Merrill, OT; Mike Stallmeyer, DT; Sidney Wells, CB; John Zuanich, OLB.
Starters returning: **Offense (8):** Phillip Chappell, T, 6-6/280, Sr.; Gerald Ford, TE, 6-3/235, Sr.; Patrick Mannelly, G, 6-6/275, Sr.; Laymarr Marshall, RB, 5-10/210, Jr.; Chad Melita, G, 6-3/290, Jr.; Reco Owens, WR, 5-11/170, Soph.; Corey Thomas, SE, 6-0/170, Jr.; Marc Wilson, FL, 6-3/200, Sr.
Defense (3): Chike Egbuniwe, ILB, 6-2/230, Jr.; Tawambi Settles, FS (moved from SS), 6-2/190, Jr.; Desi Thomas, CB, 5-11/185, Soph. **Kickers (1):** John Krueger, P, 6-4/215, Sr.
Other key returnees: Lennie Friedman, OT, Soph.; John



Corey Thomas is one of two returning starting receivers for Duke. The Blue Devils' problem? Who'll get the ball to those receivers.

Gordon, C, Jr.; Billy Granville, ILB, Sr.; Dave Green, QB, Jr.; Jeff Hodrick, TE, Jr.; Kenan Holley, CB, Soph.; Brian McCormack, DE, Soph.; LeVance McQueen, ILB, Jr.; Reco Wwens, WR, Soph.; Brandon Pollock, CB, Sr.; Matt Rader, QB, Soph.; Dawud Rasheed, RB, Soph.; Eric Scanlan, NT, Soph.
Top newcomers: Andy Bryant, NT, Soph. (RS); Darius Clark, SS, Fr. (RS); Chris Combs, DT, Fr. (RS); Richmond Flowers, WR, Fr.; Tony Liferidge, TE, Fr. (RS); Mark Ludvigsen, DE, Fr. (RS); Alonzo Moyer, CB, Fr. (RS); Wally Niemcow, G, Fr. (RS); Gannon Shepherd, DT, Fr. (RS); Ryan Stallmeyer, LB, Fr. (RS); Mike Steinbaugh, NT, Fr. (RS).
Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Marshall (188 att., 708 yds., 13 TD); **Passing:** Green (8 att., 4 comp., 0 INT, 0 TD, 27 yds.); **Receiving:** Wilson (47 rec., 531 yds., 2 TD); **Tackles:** Egbuniwe (84); **Sacks:** McCormack (2).
Site: Durham, N.C. **Stadium:** Wallace Wade (33,941).
Last league title won: 1989 (tie).

SCHEDULE

Sept. 7—at Florida State	Oct. 26—Maryland
Sept. 14—Northwestern	Nov. 2—Virginia
Sept. 21—at Army	Nov. 9—at N.C. State
Sept. 28—at Georgia Tech	Nov. 16—at Wake Forest
Oct. 5—at Navy	Nov. 23—North Carolina
Oct. 12—Clemson	

9. WAKE FOREST

Offensive strengths: Wake Forest expected to have one of its best lines in years before injuries set in last season. Three starters return in guards Bill Leeder and Doug Marsigli and tackle Tony Yarnall. Receivers Darrell Braswell, Thabiti Davis and Dan Ballou return from last year's record-setting passing attack.

Offensive weaknesses: The Deacons reluctantly abandoned the running game late in '95, rushing for a total of 68 yards in their last four games. Nine ACC players rushed for more yards than Wake did as a team (561). Wake needs a running game, if for no other reason than to kill clock and take pressure off the defense.

Defensive strengths: Linebacker Kelvin Moses, after suffering a season-ending knee injury in 1994, took advantage of a hardship ruling and recorded 101 tackles, including 11 for loss, as a redshirt freshman. A pair of juniors, tackle Robert

Fatzinger and cornerback D'Angelo Solomon, are candidates for postseason honors.

Defensive weaknesses: Wake frequently committed defensive backs to the run last year, which cut down on opponents' per-carry average (4.2) but may have contributed to a 62.2 percent completion percentage against and 20 touchdown passes. Actually, the Deacons need to get better all over.

Special teams: The Deacons need better productivity out of Bill Hollows, who was the only ACC kicker to make fewer than half (6-of-14) of his field goals. Tripp Moore is the likely replacement for underrated punter Mike Strazzeri.

Key to success: Rusty LaRue had the three most prolific passing days in the ACC last year, but many people have forgotten that Brian Kuklick had the starting job before suffering a broken arm in the second game of the season. He inherits an offense that averaged more than 500 yards in its last three games.

Outlook: Wake Forest has been patient, awarding coach Jim Caldwell a contract extension after last year's 1-10 season. Caldwell has been patient, too, redshirting 24 players last year, including 20 of 23 freshmen. The Deacons have a chance for their first four-win season since 1992.

DEMON DEACONS DATA

Coach: Jim Caldwell (6-27, 3 years).

1995 record: 1-10. ACC: 0-8/9th.

Key losses: Marlon Estes, WR; Rick Gardner, DE; Tucker Grace, LB; Rusty LaRue, QB; Greg McCracken, C; Brent Morehead, CB; Elton Ndoma-Ogar, OT; Alexis Sockwell, SS; Mike Strazzeri, P.

Starters returning: **Offense (8):** Dan Ballou, WR, 5-11/162, Sr.; William Clark, TE, 6-3/215, Sr.; Rob Hyman, C (moved from DT), 6-4/264, Jr.; Bill Leeder, G, 6-3/306, Sr.; John Lewis, RB, 5-10/228, Sr.; Doug Marsigli, G, 6-5/290, Sr.; Wade Shaw, FB, 6-1/229, Soph.; Tony Yarnall, T, 6-4/281, Sr.

Defense (6): Robert Fatzinger, T, 6-4/266, Jr.; Rob Hyman, T, 6-4/264, Jr.; Kelvin Moses, LB, 6-2/216, Soph.; Jeffrey Mures, OLB, 6-2/180, Soph.; D'Angelo Solomon, CB, 5-8/164, Jr.; Terrence Suber, FS, 5-10/179, Sr.; David Zadel, E, 6-5/234, Jr. **Kickers (1):** Bill Hollows, K, 6-1/221, Sr.

Other key returnees: Darrell Braswell, WR, Jr.; Taris Clark, G, Jr.; Thabiti Davis, WR, Jr.; Jeff Flowe, OL, Soph. (RS/injury); Kelvin Jones, DE, Soph.; Brian Kuklick, QB, Soph. (RS/broken arm); Herman Lewis, RB, Jr.; Jon Mannon, LB, Soph. (RS/injury); Tripp Moore, P, Soph.; DaLawn Parrish, FS, Soph.

Top newcomers: Matt Burdick, K, Fr.; Jammie Deese, WR, Fr. (RS); Bobby Jones, DB, Fr.; Morgan Kane, RB, Fr. (RS); Dustin Lyman, LB, Fr. (RS); Fred Robbins, DT, Fr. (RS); Sam Setter, OG, Fr. (RS); Clinton Wilburn, DT, Fr. (RS).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** John Lewis (110 att., 304 yds., 5 TD); **Passing:** Kuklick (28 att., 15 comp., 0 INT, 2 TD, 235 yds.); **Receiving:** Braswell (51 rec., 557 yds., 1 TD); **Tackles:** Moses (101); **Sacks:** Parrish, Kelvin Jones (2).

Site: Winston-Salem, N.C. **Stadium:** Groves (31,500).

Last league title won: 1970.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 29—Appalachian State	Oct. 19—at Maryland
Sept. 7—Northwestern	Oct. 26—Navy
Sept. 14—at Georgia Tech	Nov. 9—Florida St. (at Orlando)
Sept. 21—Virginia	Nov. 16—Duke
Sept. 28—at Clemson	Nov. 23—at N.C. State
Oct. 5—North Carolina	

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SCOUTING THE ACC

HONOR ROLL

Best offensive backfield:	Florida State.
Best wide receivers:	Florida State.
Best offensive line:	Maryland.
Best defensive line:	Florida State.
Best linebackers:	North Carolina.
Best secondary:	Maryland.
Best special teams:	Virginia.
Hardest hitter:	Anthony Simmons, LB, Clemson.
Best back-up quarterback:	Dan Kendra, Florida State.
Best pro prospect:	Andre Cooper, WR, Florida State.
Best game-day atmosphere:	Clemson.

RANKING THE RECRUITING

Top recruit in parentheses

1. Florida State (RB Laveranues Coles) The Seminoles, who became one of college football's elite programs with predominantly in-state talent, signed the No. 1 and 2 running backs in the state in Jacksonville neighbors Coles and Vannerz Gooch.
2. Georgia Tech (QB Quincy Carter).
3. Virginia (RB Thomas Jones).
4. Clemson (LB Idris Price).
5. Maryland (RB Damone Boone).
6. North Carolina (LB Brandon Spoon).
7. N.C. State (RB Rahshon Spikes).
8. Duke (WR Richmond Flowers).
9. Wake Forest (DB Bobby Jones).

wide receiver Derrick Steagall. If Steagall is going to fulfill his immense potential, this has to be the year. A former high school All-American who reportedly runs a 4.2 40, Steagall has scored six touchdowns in three seasons. In the sake of fairness, he has missed nine games because of injury.

Best coach: Florida State's Bobby Bowden. Bowden has the Seminoles among the nation's elite every season. Virginia's George Welsh deserves mention, too—he has taken a once-downtrodden program and made it into one of the ACC's best.



Steagall

Best staff:

Georgia Tech. Coach George O'Leary has two of the nation's premier line coaches in Pat Watson (offense) and Larry New (defense). The Yellow Jackets' rushing offense more than doubled from 1994 to '95, and the rushing defense allowed 1,500 fewer yards.

Coach on the hot seat: Wake Forest's Jim Caldwell. The school renewed his contract in early February, which, not coincidentally, was only days before national signing day. Although there's no indication that Caldwell is in immediate trouble, he has a three-year record of 6-27 overall and 2-22 in the ACC.

Best bets: Florida State won't get jet lag. The Seminoles play nine games in Florida, including Wake Forest in Orlando and Maryland in Miami. The

ACC should be ashamed of itself for allowing Wake and Maryland to move their home games with Florida State for the sake of \$850,000-\$1 million paydays. ... Virginia's George Welsh will become the ACC's winningest coach. He and former North Carolina and Wake Forest coach Bill Dooley are tied with 98 victories apiece. It will be a little tougher for Welsh to pass former Clemson coach Frank Howard, who had 66 victories against conference opposition. Welsh has 59 league wins going into this year. ... Virginia will win at least seven games for the 10th consecutive year, and North Carolina will extend its streak of winning seasons to seven. ... Florida State will win 10 or more games for the 10th consecutive season and win its 12th consecutive bowl game. The Seminoles are 13-0-1 in their past 14 bowls. ... Maryland senior Geroy Simon will get the 40 receptions he needs to break Clarkston Hines' ACC record of 189 career receptions. Simon already holds the league records for receptions in a game (16, tied) and season (77). ... Expect Simon and North Carolina tailback Leon Johnson to catch at least one touchdown pass. Each had 54 receptions last year—but none for touchdowns.

Odds and ends: Clemson junior Nealon Greene is the only returning ACC quarterback who was a full-time starter last season. He has 296 passing attempts in his career, Maryland's Brian Cummings has 166 and Florida State's Thad Busby 82. ... Prominent ACC players trying to come back from reconstructive knee surgery include North Carolina wide receiver Octavus Barnes and Florida State outside linebacker Sam Cowart. Two of the three main ligaments in Cowart's left knee were torn in the Orange Bowl and he likely will require 12-18 months of rehabilitation. ... Georgia Tech, which traditionally begins school later than any other ACC team, will play three of its five home games without the students on campus. Tech opens later than usual this year because of the Olympics. ... Darrell Moody, Clemson offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach, is certain to experience strange feelings August 31 when the Tigers visit North Carolina. Moody was offensive coordinator at UNC for eight years before resigning under pressure after last season. ... Greg Davis, previously the quarterback coach at Georgia, is the new offensive coordinator at North Carolina. UNC graduate Ken Mack, a Virginia assistant for 14 years, has returned to Chapel Hill as running backs coach. ... Duke coach Fred Goldsmith has made wholesale changes in his staff, bringing in former Clemson assistant Bob Trott as his defensive coordinator and promoting quarterback coach Larry Beckish to offensive coordinator. ... The most noteworthy of the contract extensions given ACC coaches was the five-year renewal given Florida State's Bobby Bowden, whose deal pays \$975,000 per year.

—DOUG DOUGHTY

Ascending: Maryland. Mark Duffner wasn't the most secure coach in the league after going 9-24 in his first three seasons, but a 6-5 record last year—and acceptable graduation rates—got him a contract extension through the 1997 season.

Descending: North Carolina State. The Wolfpack lost eight of its last 10 games in 1995, a startling drop for a program that won nine or more games in 1991, '92 and '94.

Nightmare schedule: North Carolina State. The Wolfpack faces three tough non-conference opponents in Alabama, Purdue and East Carolina.

Dream schedule: Maryland. As recently as 1991, the Terrapins played Syracuse, West Virginia, Pittsburgh and Penn State, a non-conference slate that may have contributed to Joe Krivak becoming a former Maryland coach. This year, the Terrapins open with Northern Illinois and Division I-A neophyte Alabama-Birmingham. Their third non-conference opponent, West Virginia, is rebuilding after a 5-6 season.

Best matchup of the year: Clemson at North Carolina, August 31. Recent history would suggest that the Tigers are a lock, with 13 victories in their past 15 games against the Tar Heels, but UNC probably will be favored with this year's game at Kenan Stadium. The winner won't automatically become an ACC contender, but the loser faces an uphill struggle. No good team likes to be 0-1 before September.

Worst matchup of the year: Wake Forest vs. Florida State in Orlando, November 9. Although the Deacons have been no less successful against the Seminoles than several other ACC teams, the Deacons thought so little of their chances this year that they agreed to move a home game to the Citrus Bowl for a big-money guarantee.

Bowl bound: Clemson and Virginia had large followings last season at the Gator and Peach bowls, respectively, but the ACC isn't known for traveling well in the postseason. Florida State, Virginia, Clemson and North Carolina—the four league teams that went bowling last season—are the best bets.

Biggest shoes to fill: Virginia quarterback Mike Groh's. The Cavaliers won nine games in back-to-back seasons for the first time in school history at least partly because of Groh's leadership. Fifth-year senior Tim Sherman filled in capably for Groh on several occasions but faces a stiff challenge from sophomore Aaron Brooks.

Most underrated player: Clemson wide receiver Antwan Wyatt. Wyatt has 75 receptions over the past two seasons but hasn't made even second-team All-ACC. Maybe that's because the conference doesn't pick a return specialist, Wyatt led the ACC in kickoff returns and was fourth in punt returns.

Most overrated player: Georgia Tech

1. MIAMI

Offensive strengths: The Hurricanes have so many weapons. Jammi German and Yatil Green, who combined for 66 catches, 1,206 yards and five touchdowns last season, are the receivers, though German suffered a severe knee injury during spring practice. Ryan Clement, 7-1 in his eight starts last season, and Scott Covington are the quarterbacks. Lest you forget, the 'Canes can run, too. Tailback Danyell Ferguson rushed for 1,069 yards last season, and freshman James Jackson—who originally signed with Notre Dame in '95 but didn't meet that school's academic requirements—has the look of a star.

Offensive weaknesses: Miami could use some depth at quarterback. K.C. Jones, who sat out spring drills rehabbing from left knee surgery that cost him seven games last season, is the best center in college football. He needs to be fully recovered if the line is to play to its potential.

Defensive strengths: If linebacker Ray Lewis hadn't made an early exit for the NFL, Miami would have returned all 11 starters. Scary thought, isn't it? Miami is loaded with experience and talent, especially along the line and in the secondary. End Kenard Lang is a big-timer.

Defensive weaknesses: With Lewis gone, it could put a considerable strain on the linebacking corps. James Burgess and Twan Russell have to step up and fill the void; freshman Nathaniel Webster likely will see time there.

Special teams: Miami never has had one guy handle both placement and punting duties, but the 'Canes might have to gamble on Andy Crosland, a left-footed redshirt freshman. The return teams were much improved last year.

Key to success: The Hurricanes must put their tribulations with the NCAA behind them and focus on developing the young talent coach Butch Davis has assembled. They also have to overcome any aftereffects stemming from the offseason murder of reserve linebacker Marlin Barnes.

Outlook: Provided they avoid the 1-3 start they had a year ago when they lost, in order, to bowl-bound UCLA, Virginia Tech and Florida State, the Hurricanes will be on the rebound. They likely will encounter little resistance from their first four opponents before facing Florida State.

HURRICANES DATA

Coach: Butch Davis (8-3, 1 year).

1995 record: 8-3. Big East: 6-1/T1st.

Key losses: Mike Crissy, P; Derrick Harris, FB; Ray Lewis, MLB (declared for NFL draft); Dane Prewitt, K; Alan Symonette, G; Syll Tucker, TE.

Starters returning: **Offense (8):** Kerlin Blaise, T, 6-5/281, Jr.; Ryan Clement, QB, 6-2/200, Jr.; Danyell Ferguson, TB, 6-0/200, Sr.; Jammi German, WR, 6-0/175, Sr. (may miss season with knee injury); Yatil Green, WR, 6-3/204, Jr.; J Ina, T, 6-3/289, Sr.; K.C. Jones, C, 6-2/261, Sr.; Richard Mercier, G, 6-4/273, Soph.; Mike Wehner, C, 6-5/284, Jr. **Defense (10):** James Burgess, MLB (moved from OLB), 6-0/218, Sr.; Marvin Davis, T, 6-2/267, Sr.; Denny Fortney, T, 6-4/249, Jr.; Chris Gibson, SS, 6-0/182, Sr.; Kenny Holmes, E, 6-4/247, Sr.; Carlos Jones, CB, 5-11/173, Sr.; Kenard Lang, E, 6-4/251, Jr.; Earl Little, CB, 6-1/180, Sr.; Tremain Mack, FS, 6-0/191, Jr.; Twan Russell, OLB, 6-2/212, Sr. **Kickers:** None.

Other key returnees: Magic Benton, WR, Soph.; Antonio Coley, LB, Sr.; Scott Covington, QB, Soph.; Gerard Daphnis, TE, Sr.; Tony Gaiter, WR, Sr.; Jack Hallmon, FS, Sr.; K.C.

BIG EAST Conference Rank: 6

By MICHAEL VEGA

PREDICTIONS

1. MIAMI
2. SYRACUSE
3. VIRGINIA TECH
4. WEST VIRGINIA
5. BOSTON COLLEGE
6. PITTSBURGH
7. TEMPLE
8. RUTGERS

Jones, C, Sr.; Trent Jones, TB, Jr.; Carlo Joseph, FB, Soph.; Michael Lawson, DT, Soph.; Jason McCullough, DT, Soph.; Dyrail McMillan, TB, Soph.; Chad Pegues, DT, Soph.; Ricky Perry, G, Sr. (RS/injury); Eugene Ridgley, SS, Jr.; Omar Rolle, WR, Soph.; Dennis Scott, FS, Jr.; Jeffrey Taylor, LB, Jr.; Nick Ward, CB, Soph.; Nick Williams, FB, Soph.

Top newcomers: Andy Crosland, K/P, Fr. (RS); Quincy Hipps, DE, Fr.; James Jackson, TB, Fr.; Steve Kelly, QB, Fr.; Damione Lewis, DL, Fr.; Jevon Rhodes, LB, Fr.; Duane Starks, CB, Jr. (JC/RS); Nathaniel Webster, LB, Fr.

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Ferguson (212 att., 1,069 yds., 12 TD); **Passing:** Clement (200 att., 119 comp., 10 INT, 7 TD, 1,638 yds.); **Receiving:** German (41 rec., 730 yds., 3 TD); **Tackles:** Burgess (87); **Sacks:** Holmes (6.5).

Site: Coral Gables, Fla. Stadium: Orange Bowl (74,476). Last league title won: 1995 (tied).

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—at Memphis	Oct. 26—at West Virginia
Sept. 7—The Citadel	Nov. 2—at Temple
Sept. 12—at Rutgers	Nov. 16—Virginia Tech
Sept. 28—Pittsburgh	Nov. 23—Boston College
Oct. 12—Florida State	Nov. 30—at Syracuse
Oct. 19—East Carolina	

2. SYRACUSE

Offensive strengths: Syracuse, like Miami, should have an explosive attack. The Orangemen are loaded with the return of quarterback Donovan McNabb, fullback Rob Konrad and wide receiver Deon Maddox.

Offensive weaknesses: The only chink in Syracuse's armor appears to be the loss of receiver Marvin Harrison. It's hoped true freshmen Ian McIntosh and Quinton Spotwood can provide some badly needed depth at the position. Replacements also need to be found for Cy Ellsworth and Jim Ledger, who anchored the left side of last year's line.

Defensive strengths: The linebacking corps and secondary are two areas of strength with Antwaune Ponds, Nate Hemsley and Dana Cottrell at linebacker and free safety Donovan Darius and cornerback Kevin Abrams roaming the secondary. Abrams led the Orangemen in interceptions last year; Darius, one of the league's hardest hitters, led in tackles.

Defensive weaknesses: Depth at linebacker proved to be a problem last year, especially after Ponds suffered a broken left leg in the ninth game. Syracuse might have to rely upon some redshirt—and even true—freshmen to help bolster the ranks.

Special teams: The kicking game looks shaky. Sean Reali will handle the punting



Expect Syracuse cornerback Kevin Abrams (left) and West Virginia wide receiver David Saunders to be two of the best in the nation at their respective positions this season.

chores, but if redshirt freshman Nathan Trout doesn't pan out as a suitable replacement for the departed Olindo Mare, then Reali might have to handle the placement duties, too. Finding a punt returner to replace Harrison is important.

Key to success: Syracuse has the firepower to put plenty of points on the board, but the Orangemen need to improve their rush defense to challenge Big East big boys Miami and Virginia Tech. It proved to be a stumbling point last season.

Outlook: They'll raise the roof of the Carrier Dome if Syracuse capitalizes on the momentum generated by its 41-0 rout over Clemson in the Gator Bowl. With its explosive offense and talent-rich defense, Syracuse will be a strong contender for the conference title and another bowl appearance.

ORANGEMEN DATA

Coach: Paul Pasqualoni (42-15-1, 5 years; 76-32-1 overall, 10 years).

1995 record: 9-3 (beat Clemson in Gator Bowl). Big East: 5-2/3rd.

Key losses: Cy Ellsworth, G; Marvin Harrison, WR; Jim Ledger, OT; Olindo Mare, K; Chris Marques, DE/OLB; Darrell Parker, SS; Dave Rebar, DE/OLB; Sir Mawn Wilson, WR.

Starters returning: **Offense (7):** Donovan McNabb, QB, 6-1/208, Soph.; Terry Morris, FB, 5-10/218, Sr.; Harvey Pennypacker, C, 6-3/286, Sr.; Shelton Prescott, G, 6-4/292, Sr.; Malcolm Thomas, TB, 5-8/196, Sr.; Brent Warren, T, 6-5/299, Jr.; Roland Williams, TE, 6-4/262, Jr. **Defense (8):** Kevin Abrams, CB, 5-8/158, Sr.; Antonio Anderson, T, 6-7/307, Sr.; Dana Cottrell, ILB, 6-3/235, Sr.; Jeff Danish, T/NT, 6-5/286, Jr.; Donovan Darius, FS, 6-1/204, Jr.; Rod Gadson, CB, 5-7/173, Jr.; Nate Hemsley, OLB, 6-0/208, Sr.; Antwaune Ponds, ILB, 6-1/232, Jr. **Kickers (1):** Sean Reali, P, 5-10/192, Sr.

Other key returnees: Mike Brown, ILB, Sr.; Scott Freeney, DT, Sr.; Tebucky Jones, TB, Jr.; Rob Konrad, FB, Soph.; Deon Maddox, WR, Sr.; Kyle McIntosh, TB, Soph.; George Meyers, DE, Sr.; John Michaelidis, G, Sr.; Dwayne Morgan, DE/OLB, Jr.; Phil Nash, CB, Soph.; Brad Patkovich, OT, Jr.; Kaseem Sinceno, TE, Jr.; Jim Turner, WR/KR, Jr.; Anthony Walker, SS, Sr.; Jason Walters, DT/NT, Jr.

Top newcomers: Vernon Banks, FS, Fr. (RS); Cory Bowen, C, Fr. (RS); Keith Bulluck, SS, Fr. (RS); Donald Dinkins, DT, Fr. (RS); Ian McIntosh, WR, Fr.; Quinton Spotwood, WR, Fr.; Nathan Trout, K, Fr. (RS); John Wellington, OL, Fr. (RS).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Thomas (124 att., 603 yds., 8 TD); **Passing:** McNabb (207 att., 128 comp., 1,991 yds., 6 INT, 16 TD); **Receiving:** Thomas (19 rec., 183 yds., 1 TD); **Tackles:** Darius (131); **Sacks:** Hemsley, Anderson (3.5).

Site: Syracuse, N.Y. **Stadium:** Carrier Dome (50,000).

Last league title won: None.

SCHEDULE

Sept. 7—North Carolina	Nov. 2—at West Virginia
Sept. 21—at Minnesota	Nov. 9—at Tulane
Sept. 28—Virginia Tech	Nov. 16—Army
Oct. 5—Rutgers	Nov. 23—at Temple
Oct. 12—Pittsburgh	Nov. 30—Miami
Oct. 26—at Boston College	

3. VIRGINIA TECH

Offensive strengths: Quarterback Jim Druckenmiller is strong enough to benchpress a Buick. The same goes for center Billy Conaty and tackle Jay Hagood, both of whom, coincidentally, lost to Druckenmiller in the team's Strongman Competition last season.

Offensive weaknesses: What good is a strong-armed quarterback if he doesn't have anyone to throw to? Druckenmiller's biggest challenge will be finding a deep threat to replace departed receiver Bryan Still. Senior Cornelius White may be the answer, but after him, it's a tossup. Michael Stuewe, Shawn Scales and Angelo Harrison need to step up. The loss of three-year starting tailback Dwayne Thomas is big, though good things are ex-



WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY

Safety Vann Washington is an important part of what should be a solid West Virginia secondary.

pected from junior Ken Oxendine.

Defensive strengths: The Hokies were, hands down, the most bloodthirsty defense in the league last season. End Cornell Brown, the Big East Defensive Player of the Year, had 103 tackles and led the team with 14 sacks. He is the best Tech defender since Outland winner Bruce Smith in 1984. Safety Torrian Gray is excellent.

Defensive weaknesses: Virginia Tech's run defense might be compromised if the Hokies do not find replacements for linemen J.C. Price, Hank Coleman and Jim Baron. The key returning lineman, Waverly Jackson, sat out spring drills after arthroscopic knee surgery.

Special teams: The kicking job vacated by Atle Larsen could go to incoming freshman Shayne Graham, a prized recruit. Another newcomer, redshirt Jim Kibble, will challenge incumbent punter John Thomas.

Key to success: Defense is what won Virginia Tech its first Big East championship last season, and the Hokies aren't likely to deviate from that formula in 1996.

Outlook: Tech became a significant player in the Big East by beating Miami and winning the conference title. It followed up by soundly thrashing Texas in the Sugar Bowl. The schedule isn't kind: Tech plays at Syracuse and at Miami.

HOKIES DATA

Coach: Frank Beamer (51-49-2, 9 years; 93-72-4 overall, 15 years).

1995 record: 10-2 (beat Texas in Sugar Bowl). Big East: 6-1/71st.

Key losses: Jim Baron, DT; Mike Blanchin, OT; Hank Coleman, DE; George DelRocco, LB; Jermaine Holmes, WR;

Atle Larsen, K; Chris Malone, G; J.C. Price, DT; Bryan Still, WR; Dwayne Thomas, TB; William Yarbrough, FS.

Starters returning: **Offense (6):** Billy Conaty, C, 6-3/306, Sr.; Gennaro DiNapoli, G, 6-3/290, Jr.; Jim Druckenmiller, QB, 6-5/223, Sr.; Brian Edmonds, FB, 5-10/235, Sr.; Jay Hagood, T, 6-4/307, Sr.; Bryan Jennings, TE, 6-4/252, Sr. **Defense (6):** Cornell Brown, E, 6-2/240, Sr.; Torrian Gray, FS (moved from SS), 6-0/200, Sr.; Larry Green, CB, 5-7/175, Sr.; Loren Johnson, CB, 5-10/179, Soph.; Myron Newsome, LB, 5-9/216, Sr.; Brandon Semones, OLB, 6-0/202, Sr. **Kickers (1):** John Thomas, P, 6-1/197, Soph.

Other key returnees: Antonio Banks, CB, Sr.; Brad Baylor, DT, Jr.; Angelo Harrison, FL, Soph.; Korey Irby, SS (moved from LB), Jr.; Waverly Jackson, DT, Sr.; Anthony Kapp, OT, Soph.; Ken Oxendine, TB, Jr.; Marcus Parker, TB (moved from FB), Jr.; Pierson Prioleau, SS, Soph.; Shawn Scales, WR, Jr.; Michael Stuewe, SE, Jr.; T.J. Washington, OT, Sr.; Todd Washington, G, Jr.; Danny Wheel, DE, Jr.; Cornelius White, WR, Sr.

Top newcomers: Robert Adams, DE, Fr.; Carl Bradley, DT, Fr.; Pedro Ellison, TE, Fr. (RS); Shelly Ellison, FB, Fr. (RS); William Flowers, DT, Jr. (JC); Marcus Gildersleeve, WR, Fr. (RS); Shayne Graham, K, Fr.; Michael Hawkes, LB, Fr. (RS); Jim Kibble, P, Fr. (RS); Matt Stroschein, FS, Fr. (RS).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Oxendine (106 att., 593 yds., 4 TD); **Passing:** Druckenmiller (294 att., 151 comp., 11 INT, 14 TD, 2,103 yds.); **Receiving:** White (22 rec., 312 yds., 2 TD); **Tackles:** Brown (103); **Sacks:** Brown (14).

Site: Blacksburg, Va. **Stadium:** Lane (50,000).

Last league title won: 1995 (tie).

SCHEDULE

Sept. 7—at Akron	Nov. 2—SW Louisiana
Sept. 14—at Boston College	Nov. 9—East Carolina
Sept. 21—Rutgers	Nov. 16—at Miami
Sept. 28—at Syracuse	Nov. 23—West Virginia
Oct. 12—Temple	Nov. 29—Virginia
Oct. 26—Pittsburgh	

4. WEST VIRGINIA

Offensive strengths: Third-year starter Chad Johnston is a proven commodity at quarterback. He passed for 2,019 yards and 13 touchdowns last season. David Saunders and Rahsaan Vanterpool, an all-purpose threat, combined for 72 catches, 1,288 yards and eight touchdowns. They lead West Virginia's deepest wide receiver corps in years.

Offensive weaknesses: Three starters were lost in the backfield, so the running game will be somewhat suspect until holdovers Curtis Keaton and Khari Mott establish themselves at tailback. Those two combined for only 173 yards last season in limited playing time. The Mountaineers also need more consistency and fewer injuries on the line.

Defensive strengths: Up front, the Mountaineers appear to be very strong, especially with the return of Canute Curtis, who ranked second in the Big East in sacks last year. Charles Emanuel, Mike Logan and Vann Washington are experienced veterans who solidify the secondary.

Defensive weaknesses: West Virginia lost only three of the top 22 players on last season's two-deep, but one of those—cornerback Aaron Beasley—was a four-year starter and consensus All-American.

Special teams: Coach Don Nehlen will overhaul the kicking game by looking at JC transfer Jade Stillings at punter and subjecting junior kicker Bryan Baumann to some stiff competition. Baumann was 10-of-16 on field-goal attempts but only 4-of-6 under 29 yards last season. Vanterpool and Logan likely will share the kick-return duties.

Key to success: With the switch to a pro-set offense, the Mountaineers will need to take advantage of their team speed on the

PRESEASON ALL-BIG EAST TEAM

PLAYERS OF THE YEAR

OFFENSE



DONOVAN
McNABB
QB, Syracuse

DEFENSE



CORNELL BROWN
E, Virginia Tech

NEWCOMERS OF THE YEAR

OFFENSE: James Jackson, TB, Miami
DEFENSE: Nathaniel Webster, LB, Miami

FIRST TEAM

OFFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
WR	JAMMI GERMAN, Miami	6-0/175	Sr.
WR	DAVID SAUNDERS, West Virginia	6-2/205	Soph.
TE	TODD POLLACK, Boston College	6-4/237	Jr.
T	JAY HAGOOD, Virginia Tech	6-4/307	Sr.
T	DAN ORISKOVICH, Boston College	6-3/293	Sr.
G	SHELTON PRESCOTT, Syracuse	6-4/292	Sr.
G	MARK NORI, Boston College	6-4/294	Sr.
C	K.C. JONES, Miami	6-2/261	Sr.
QB	DONOVAN McNABB, Syracuse	6-1/208	Soph.
RB	DANYELL FERGUSON, Miami	6-0/200	Sr.
RB	BILLY WEST, Pitt	5-10/205	Jr.

DEFENSE

E	CORNELL BROWN, Virginia Tech	6-2/240	Sr.
T	WAVERLY JACKSON, Virginia Tech	6-3/303	Sr.
E	KENARD LANG, Miami	6-4/251	Jr.
LB	NATE HEMSLEY, Syracuse	6-0/208	Sr.
LB	ANTWAUNE PONDS, Syracuse	6-1/232	Jr.
LB	BRANDON SEMONES, Virginia Tech	6-0/202	Sr.
LB	JAMES BURGESS, Miami	6-0/218	Sr.
CB	CARLOS JONES, Miami	5-11/173	Sr.
CB	KEVIN ABRAMS, Syracuse	5-8/158	Sr.
S	TORRIAN GRAY, Virginia Tech	6-0/200	Sr.
S	DONOVIN DARIUS, Syracuse	6-1/204	Jr.

SPECIALISTS

K	CHRIS FERENCIK, Pitt	5-10/170	Soph.
P	SEAN REALI, Syracuse	5-10/192	Sr.
KR	JIM TURNER, Syracuse	6-4/205	Jr.

SECOND TEAM

OFFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
WR	RAHSAAN VANTERPOOL, W. Virginia	5-11/185	Sr.
WR	REGGIE FUNDERBURK, Rutgers	5-11/175	Sr.
TE	BRYAN JENNINGS, Virginia Tech	6-4/252	Sr.
T	TONY ORLANDINI, Pitt	6-5/280	Jr.
T	BRENT WARREN, Syracuse	6-5/299	Jr.
G	DOUG BRZEZINSKI, Boston College	6-4/296	Soph.
G	RICHARD MERCIER, Miami	6-4/273	Soph.
C	BILLY CONATY, Virginia Tech	6-3/306	Sr.
QB	RYAN CLEMENT, Miami	6-2/200	Jr.
RB	ROB KONRAD, Syracuse	6-3/230	Soph.
RB	KEN OXENDINE, Virginia Tech	6-1/221	Jr.

DEFENSE

E	CANUTE CURTIS, West Virginia	6-2/250	Sr.
T	ANTONIO ANDERSON, Syracuse	6-7/307	Sr.
E	KENNY HOLMES, Miami	6-4/247	Sr.
LB	ALSHERMON SINGLETON, Temple	6-3/228	Sr.
LB	TWAN RUSSELL, Miami	6-2/212	Sr.
LB	BRIAN SHERIDAN, Rutgers	6-0/215	Sr.
LB	MATT HAFF, Boston College	6-3/234	Sr.
CB	EARL LITTLE, Miami	6-1/180	Sr.
CB	MIKE LOGAN, West Virginia	6-1/200	Sr.
S	VANN WASHINGTON, West Virginia	6-0/200	Sr.
S	TREMAIN MACK, Miami	6-0/191	Jr.

SPECIALISTS

K	BRYAN BAUMANN, West Virginia	6-1/195	Jr.
P	NATE COCHRAN, Pitt	6-5/215	Sr.
KR	KENYATTA WATSON, Boston College	5-10/180	Sr.

perimeter. They need big years from Johnston, Saunders and Vanterpool.

Outlook: The Mountaineers might be out of sight and, sometimes, out of mind by playing in Morgantown, but you can't overlook them. There might be a transition period with a revamped offense, but the defense should help smooth things over. It also helps that they play three key Big East games—Boston College, Miami and Syracuse—at home.

MOUNTAINEERS DATA

Coach: Don Nehlen (115-68-4, 16 years; 168-103-8 overall, 25 years).

1995 record: 5-6. Big East: 4-3/T4th.

Key losses: Kantroy Barber, FB; Aaron Beasley, CB; Derrick Bell, C; John Browning, DE; Jimmy Gary, TB; Buddy Hager, G; Joe DeLong, OT; Lovett Purnell, TE; J.T. Thomas, LB; Robert Walker, TB.

Starters returning: Offense (5): Ted Daniels, G, 6-3/285, Soph.; Chad Johnston, QB, 6-3/210, Sr.; David Saunders, WR, 6-2/205, Soph.; Rahsaan Vanterpool, WR/KR, 5-11/185, Sr.; Bryan Washington, T, 6-6/310, Sr. **Defense (8):** Canute Curtis, E, 6-2/250, Sr.; Charles Emanuel, SS, 6-0/195, Sr.; Kevin Landolt, T, 6-5/275, Soph.; Mike Logan, CB, 6-1/200, Sr.; Elige Longino, LB, 6-2/230, Sr.; Bernard Russ, LB, 6-1/230, Sr.; Henry Slay, T, 6-2/275, Jr.; Vann Washington, FS, 6-0/200, Sr. **Kickers (1):** Bryan Baumann, K, 6-1/195, Jr.

Other key returnees: Bernardo Amerson, LB, Sr.; Bob Baum, DE, Jr.; Eric Boykin, TE (moved from QB), Jr.; Eric deGroh, C, Soph.; Shawn Foreman, WR, Soph.; Mike Horn, G, Sr. (RS/knee); Curtis Keaton, RB, Soph.; Jerald Long, WR, Soph. (RS/injury); Bill McElroy, G, Jr.; Khari Mott, RB, Sr.; Jamie Sweeney, LB, Jr.; John Thornton, DE, Soph.; Leroy White, FB, Jr.; Jason Williams, LB, Jr.

Top newcomers: Anthony Becht, TE, Fr. (RS); Ryan Brady, LB, Fr. (RS); Jamie Fields, DB, Jr. (JC); John Hadley, LB, Jr. (JC); Brock Holland, OL, Jr. (JC); Solomon Page, OT, Fr. (RS); Jade Stillings, P, Jr. (JC); Gary Stills, LB, Soph. (Prop 48); Alvin Swoope, TB, Fr. (RS).

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: White (42 att., 260 yds., 1 TD); Passing: Johnston (248 att., 127 comp., 13 INT,



Expect BC tackle Dan Oriskovich to be one of the Big East's premier offensive linemen.

13 TD, 2,019 yds.); Receiving: Saunders (38 rec., 682 yds., 5 TD); Tackles: Russ (78); Sacks: Curtis (10).

Site: Morgantown, W.Va. **Stadium:** Mountaineer Field (63,500).

Last league title won: 1993.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—at Pittsburgh	Oct. 19—at Temple
Sept. 7—Western Michigan	Oct. 26—Miami
Sept. 14—East Carolina	Nov. 2—Syracuse
Sept. 21—at Purdue	Nov. 9—at Rutgers
Sept. 26—Maryland	Nov. 23—at Virginia Tech
Oct. 5—Boston College	

5. BOSTON COLLEGE

Offensive strengths: There are plenty of hands on deck. Four experienced receivers return, and prized redshirt freshman Anthony DiCosmo is a welcome addition. BC also boasts four veteran tight ends, each of whom caught at least one touchdown pass last season.

Offensive weaknesses: Who's going to get the ball to all those receivers? Two-year starter Mark Hartsell declared for the NFL draft (and wasn't selected), leaving the quarterback job to junior Matt Hasselbeck and sophomore Scott Mutryn. The backfield will be thin after sophomore tailback Jamall Anderson suffered a season-ending knee injury in the first week of spring practice. If sophomore Mike Cloud, last season's leading rusher, is unable to return 100 percent from offseason foot surgery, junior Omari Walker and redshirt freshman Quinton Lee will have to carry the load.

Defensive strengths: Although injuries decimated the linebacking corps last season, BC returns several battle-tested players who filled in at the position, including talented sophomores Donovan Yarbough and Jermaine Monk. Both saw significant playing time late last season.

Defensive weaknesses: With a switch to an eight-man front, the secondary will face extreme pressure. Senior Daryl Porter will move from corner to safety to quarterback the new scheme. Both of last season's safeties and two linemen must be replaced.

Special teams: Punter Jason Malecki en-

dured baptism by fire last season when he was thrown into the breach as a true freshman. He responded with a 39.5-yard average. Junior kicker Chris Hackett returns to handle the placements, but he could be challenged by redshirt freshman John Matich.

Keys to success: BC needs a lot of things to break its way in 1996, when it will have to adapt to a new quarterback, a new defense and four new assistants.

Outlook: The Eagles have yet to make the quantum leap into the upper echelon of the Big East. The program is a sleeping giant that remained in hibernation at 4-8 last season. This season should serve as a wakeup call.

EAGLES DATA

Coach: Dan Henning (11-12-1, 2 years).

1995 record: 4-8. Big East: 4-3/74th.

Key losses: Rob Clifford, FS; Mark Hartsell, QB (declared for NFL draft); Pete Kendall, OT; Dan McGuire, K; Tim Morabito, NT; Tim O'Brien, C; Justice Smith, RB; Chris Sullivan, DT; Terence Wiggins, SS.

Starters returning: **Offense (8):** Doug Brzezinski, G, 6-4/296, Soph.; Steve Everson, WR, 5-10/162, Jr.; Mark Nori, G, 6-4/294, Sr.; Dan Oriskovich, T, 6-3/293, Sr.; Todd Pollack, TE, 6-4/237, Jr.; Omari Walker, RB, 5-10/212, Jr.; Kenyatta Watson, WR, 5-10/180, Sr. **Defense (7):** Markell Blount, OLB, 6-2/215, Jr.; Stalin Colinet, E (may play T), 6-6/259, Sr.; Bobby Edmonds, ILB, 6-1/227, Soph.; Nick Gianacchos, E (may play T), 6-4/269, Sr.; Matt Haff, OLB, 6-3/234, Sr.; Daryl Porter, FS (moved from CB), 5-9/189, Sr.; Kiernan Speight, CB, 5-8/166, Soph. **Kickers (1):** Jason Malecki, P, 6-2/210, Soph.

Other key returnees: Jamall Anderson, TB, Soph. (suffered serious knee injury in spring practice); Mike Cloud, RB, Soph.; John Coleman, NT, Sr.; Scott Dragos, TE, Jr.; Billy Gustin, S, Soph.; Chris Hackett, K, Jr.; Dennis Harding, WR, Soph.; Matt Hasselbeck, QB, Jr.; Michael Hemmert, TE, Jr.; Brandon King, WR, Soph.; Brian Maye, LB, Jr.; Jonathan Miles, OT, Soph.; Jermaine Monk, LB, Soph.; Scott Mutryn, QB, Soph. (RS); Erik Storz, DE, Soph.; Shalom Toftree, S, Jr.; Donovan Yarbough, LB, Soph.

Top newcomers: Darnell Alford, C, Fr. (RS); Anthony DiCosmo, WR, Fr. (RS); Tim Hasselbeck, QB, Fr.; Noah LaRose, OL, Soph. (transfer); Quinton Lee, RB, Fr. (RS); John Matich, K, Fr. (RS); Mike Willets, DL, Fr. (RS).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Cloud (102 att., 626 yds., 2 TD); **Passing:** Hasselbeck (60 att., 27 comp., 1 INT, 2

TD, 280 yds.); **Receiving:** Everson (42 rec., 557 yds., 1 TD); **Tackles:** Haff (94); **Sacks:** Storz (5).

Site: Chestnut Hill, Mass. **Stadium:** Alumni (44,500).

Last league title won: None.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—at Hawaii	Oct. 19—Rutgers
Sept. 14—Virginia Tech	Oct. 26—Syracuse
Sept. 21—at Michigan	Oct. 31—at Pittsburgh
Sept. 28—Navy	Nov. 9—Notre Dame
Oct. 5—at West Virginia	Nov. 16—Temple
Oct. 12—at Cincinnati	Nov. 23—at Miami

6. PITTSBURGH

Offensive strengths: The return of a healthy Billy West will go a long way toward giving Pitt some punch in the running game. He missed all but two games last season with two injuries—a ligament sprain in his chest and a broken leg. West will have some help from sophomore Demetrius Harris, who stepped in during West's absence last season, and JC transfer Dwayne Schulters. Four starters return on the line.

Offensive weaknesses: The biggest parts of the passing game—quarterback and wide receiver—are the biggest concerns. At both positions, the Panthers will be looking for unproven players to step up. Only two quarterbacks—redshirt junior Pete Gonzalez and redshirt sophomore Matt Lytle—have any game experience.

Defensive strengths: Although Pitt was susceptible to the big play a year ago, the Panthers hope a veteran secondary led by Denorse Mosley will reverse the trend. Like West, Mosley missed most of last season with injuries.

Defensive weaknesses: Pitt faces a major rebuilding job after losing its top three tacklers from '95, all of whom were linebackers. Senior Mike Mohring will have to anchor a line that also lost three starters.

Special teams: This is probably the one area that won't cause John Majors to lose sleep. Kicker Chris Ferencik and punter Nate Cochran, both steady performers last season, give solid footing to Pitt's kicking game. Ferencik missed only two kicks last year (one PAT, one FGA), and Cochran averaged 42.9 yards per punt.

Key to success: West must stay healthy. The Panthers will lean on him to carry the offense until the passing game can catch up.

Outlook: This is the 20th anniversary of Pitt's only national championship season, but any resemblance between that team and this one is purely coincidental. After plummeting to the conference cellar last season, it would appear Pitt has nowhere to go but up. But the Panthers are hoping an infusion of talent from a highly touted recruiting class can jump-start their long uphill climb.

PANTHERS DATA

Coach: John Majors (41-38-1, 8 years; 181-130-10 overall, 28 years).

1995 record: 2-9. Big East: 0-7/8th.

Key losses: Anthony Dorsett, CB; Mike Halapin, DT; Matt Hosilyk, OT; Dietrich Jells, WR; Jon McCray, LB; Zaiti Moody, DE; John Ryan, QB; Dell Seagraves, TE; David Sumner, OLB; Tom Tumulty, OLB; Tyler Young, DT.

Starters returning: **Offense (6):** Curtis Anderson, WR, 6-1/190, Sr.; Jeff Craig, G, 6-5/285, Sr.; Jon Marzoch, G, 6-3/270, Jr.; Tony Orlandini, T, 6-5/280, Jr.; Chris Schneider, FB, 6-1/240, Soph.; Reggie Thomas, C, 6-5/265, Jr. **Defense (3):** John Jenkins, FS, 6-2/185, Jr.; Jared Miller, E, 6-3/245, Sr.; Rasshad Whitmill, CB, 5-11/191, Soph. **Kickers (2):** Nate

THE PRESSURE'S ON

A major question: Can Pitt's coach win now?

Since arriving for his second tour of duty at Pittsburgh, John Majors has had to contend with restoring the school's proud football tradition and the specter of his own success.

High hopes accompanied Majors when he flew into town in 1992 to take over a program that had gone 12-21-1 in three seasons under Paul Hackett. T-shirts proclaimed "Back to the Future," but the Pitt program had fallen into such severe disrepair that a quick turnaround wasn't possible.



Majors

And 1992 wasn't 1972, a time when coaches could sign as many recruits as they wanted; now, they're limited to 25 scholarships per year and no more than 85 athletes on scholarship at one time.

So while fans longed for 1976, when the Panthers went 12-0 and won the national championship and running back Tony Dorsett captured the Heisman Trophy, they have remained grounded in the reality of 1990s Pitt football: one winning season (6-5 in 1991) amid mounting losses—46, to be exact. That's almost eight per season.

Majors hasn't been able to reverse the trend, going 8-25 in his reunion tour after posting a 33-13-1 mark from 1973-76. And he may be feeling the pressure for the first time since resigning under fire at Tennessee in 1992, where he left under a cloud of controversy.

Pitt is 4-17 in Big East games under Majors the past three years. The Panthers finished sixth in the league in Majors' first season, seventh his second and last in 1995, when they finished 2-9 and went winless (0-7) for the first time in conference play. Even Temple, the Big East sad sack that other league teams routinely kick around for a win, beat Pitt to earn its first-ever conference victory.

Majors' latest recruiting class is considered a good one, the best since he returned to the school; the class is headlined by two Pennsylvania products, offensive tackle Ben Kopp and quarterback Tony Zimmerman. But Majors will be 61 when he begins his 29th season as a college head coach this fall. His reputation has bought him time less-established coaches would not have enjoyed. But some think his grace period has expired. It's time to win—now.

—MICHAEL VEGA



Pitt's running game struggled last season when star tailback Billy West was burdened by injuries.

Cochran, P, 6-5/215, Sr.; Chris Ferencik, K, 5-10/170, Soph.
Other key returnees: Chuck Brown, SS, Soph.; Mark Butler, WR, Sr.; Jason Chavis, LB, Sr. (RS/knee); Phil Clarke, LB, Soph.; Pete Gonzalez, QB, Jr.; Demetrius Harris, RB, Soph.; Roderick Humphrey, LB, Jr.; John Jones, TE, Soph. (RS/broken hand); Matt Lytle, QB, Soph.; Mike Mohring, DT, Sr.; Frank Moore, DT, Jr.; Denorse Mosley, CB, Jr. (RS/ankle, thumb); Mike Schultz, OT, Soph.; Billy West, RB, Jr. (RS/leg, chest); Jim Williams, LB, Sr.; Marlin Young, DE, Soph.
Top newcomers: Ernest Coakley, LB, Jr. (JC); Aamir Dew, RB, Fr.; Demond Gibson, DL, Fr.; Julian Graham, LB, Fr. (RS); Hank Poteat, RB, Fr.; Dwayne Schulters, RB, Jr. (JC); Demale Stanley, WR, Fr. (RS); Juan Williams, TE, Jr. (JC); Rayfield Wright, DL, Jr. (JC); Tony Zimmerman, QB, Fr.
Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Harris (137 att., 610 yds., 5 TD); Passing: Gonzalez (76 att., 30 comp., 5 INT, 3 TD, 478 yds.); Receiving: Butler (18 rec., 290 yds., 1 TD); Tackles: Jenkins (54); Sacks: Miller (2).
Site: Pittsburgh. **Stadium:** Pitt (56,500).
Last league title won: None.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—West Virginia
 Sept. 7—Kent
 Sept. 14—Houston
 Sept. 21—at Ohio State
 Sept. 28—at Miami
 Oct. 5—Temple
 Oct. 12—at Syracuse
 Oct. 26—at Virginia Tech
 Oct. 31—Boston College
 Nov. 16—at Notre Dame
 Nov. 30—Rutgers

7. TEMPLE

Offensive strengths: Henry Burris' ability to scramble makes him one of the conference's most dangerous quarterbacks; he threw for 2,004 yards and 11 touchdowns last year. Eugene Culbreath and Ramod Lee give the backfield added potential. Van Johnson is an above-average Big East receiver.

Offensive weaknesses: Burris may have to rely upon his scrambling ability to get himself out of trouble if the line doesn't recover from the losses of Big East first-team guard John Summerday and tackle Jon Clark.

Defensive strengths: Coach Ron Dickerson has worked hard to cultivate a good line. Seniors Tim Terry, Tealang Lloyd and Jason Davis lead this year's unit.

Defensive weaknesses: The departures of Willie Brown and second-round NFL draft pick Lance Johnstone depleted the linebacking corps and marooned Alshermund Singleton, the Owls' second-leading tackler last season. He may have to make even more tackles in '96.

Special teams: The kicking game will be retooled with JC punter Jason Boles taking over for John Shay. Zane Michalski (6-of-9 on field-goal attemptss) returns.

Key to success: Although the Owls won just one game in 1995, they put up a fight in almost every one. They were outscored in the fourth period by just two points. Now, they just have to develop a knockout punch.

Outlook: Temple's seventh-place finish last year was its best in conference play in Dickerson's three seasons as coach. If the seniors can galvanize the team, the Owls are capable of winning two Big East games in '96.

OWLS DATA

Coach: Ron Dickerson (4-29, 3 years).
1995 record: 1-10. Big East: 1-6/7th.
Key losses: Marc Baxter, WR; Willie Brown, LB; Jon Clark, OT; Allen Jackson, SS; Lance Johnstone, LB; Robert McWilliams, CB; John Shay, P; John Summerday, G.
Starters returning: Offense (7): Ed Bowen, G, 6-2/280, Sr.; Henry Burris, QB, 6-2/190, Sr.; Frank Carter, FB, 5-9/210, Sr.; Roger Chancino, T, 6-5/270, Jr.; Eric Johnson, C, 6-4/275, Sr.; Van Johnson, WR, 6-1/195, Sr.; Ramod Lee, RB, 6-3/230, Soph. Defense (6): Lamond Adams, CB, 5-9/190, Soph.; Jason Davis, E, 6-4/255, Sr.; Tealang Lloyd, NT, 6-2/280, Sr.; Ted McDuffie, FS, 6-0/185, Sr.; Alshermund Singleton, LB, 6-3/228, Sr.; Tim Terry, E, 6-3/235, Sr. Kickers (1): Zane



Brian Sheridan made 132 tackles for an overworked defense last year.

Michalski, K, 5-11/201, Jr.
Other key returnees: Pat Bonner, QB, Soph.; Kevin Carrozza, C, Soph.; Kenyatta Carter, WR, Soph. (RS); Eugene Culbreath, FB (moved from TB, Sr.); Deadrake Epps, CB, Sr.; Juan Gaddy, TB, Jr.; Robert Kelly, DE, Jr.; Keith Kerrin, OLB, Sr.; Troy Kersey, SE, Jr.; Charlie Morris, G, Soph.; Scott Oster, DT, Soph.; Kevin Walker, WR, Sr.
Top newcomers: Jason Boles, P, Jr. (JC); Marko Jackson, RB/DB, Fr.; Ben Mayer, DT, Sr. (transfer); Theo Ross, G, Fr. (RS).
Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Culbreath (103 att., 451 yds., 2 TD); Passing: Burris (300 att., 139 comp., 17 INT, 11 TD, 2,004 yds.); Receiving: Kersey (20 rec., 469 yds., 4 TD); Tackles: Singleton (151); Sacks: Terry, Lloyd (4).
Site: Philadelphia. **Stadium:** Veterans (66,592).
Last league title won: None.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—at Eastern Michigan
 Sept. 7—Washington State
 Sept. 14—at Bowling Green
 Sept. 21—Penn State
 Oct. 5—at Pittsburgh
 Oct. 12—at Virginia Tech
 Oct. 19—West Virginia
 Oct. 26—at Rutgers
 Nov. 2—Miami
 Nov. 16—at Boston College
 Nov. 23—Syracuse

8. RUTGERS

Offensive strengths: Good luck finding one. At this point, the only thing Rutgers has going for it is the West Coast offense first-year coach Terry Shea plans to install. He will be his own coordinator and call all the plays.

Offensive weaknesses: Got an hour? There are too many to count. Only three starters return, but on this team, that might not be all bad.

Defensive strengths: Unlike the offense, seven returning starters give coaches more material to work with. Tackle Rashod Swinger is entering his third year as a starter, and linebacker Brian Sheridan last season became the first Rutgers player in six years to record 100 tackles. Sheridan, though, injured his shoulder during spring practice. The new coordinator, Rod Sharpless, was a co-coordinator at Virginia Tech last season.

Defensive weaknesses: Rutgers relied on a lot of young players last season, when injuries riddled the roster. That's likely to be

the case again this season. The Scarlet Knights got an early start when their best pass rusher, Rusty Swartz, suffered a career-ending knee injury during the spring.

Special teams: Junior kicker Nick Mike-Mayer will get heavy competition for the job from several underclassmen. Punter Jared Sloan appears to have a lock on his job after a solid sophomore season.

Key to success: The Scarlet Knights will need to stay healthy and keep a positive frame of mind when adversity strikes, because it appears adversity will be hitting them hard in '96.

Outlook: It's not good. In fact, when Shea staged an alumni/var-sity game in lieu of the traditional spring game, this year's Scarlet

Knights lost to the old-timers, 10-6. Shea, who coached San Jose State in 1990 and '91, has a major rebuilding project on his hands, and he had better bring a hard hat (and a good sense of humor) to East Brunswick, N.J.

SCARLET KNIGHTS DATA

Coach: Terry Shea (first year; 15-6-2 overall, 2 years).
1995 record: 4-7. Big East: 2-5/6th.
Key losses: Robert Barr, OT; Marco Battaglia, TE; Matt Brown, G; Rahsaan Giddings, LB; Pat Gorman, C; Chris Kennedy, G; Ray Lucas, QB; Bruce Presley, RB; Rudy Smith, DE; Mark Washington, SS; Terrell Willis, RB (declared for NFL draft).
Starters returning: Offense (3): Reggie Funderburk, WR, 5-11/175, Sr.; Steve Harper, WR, 5-10/165, Jr.; Jack McKiernan, C (moved from T), 6-2/275, Jr. Defense (7): Cameron Chadwick, CB, 5-10/190, Sr.; Thomas Kelly, FS, 6-0/190, Jr.; Brian Sheridan, LB, 6-0/215, Sr.; Rusty Swartz, OLB, 6-2/235, Sr. (suffered career-ending knee injury in the spring); Rashod Swinger, T, 6-3/290, Sr.; Derek Ward, CB, 6-0/170, Sr.; Charles Woolridge, E, 6-3/245, Jr. Kickers (2): Nick Mike-Mayer, K, 6-1/200, Jr.; Jared Sloan, P, 6-4/200, Jr.
Other key returnees: Mike Belh, DE, Soph.; Chad Bosch, RB, Sr.; Aaron Brady, DB, Soph.; Chris Cebula, DE, Jr.; Peter Clarke, DB, Soph.; Norris Crawford, SS, Jr.; Jason Curry, TE, Sr.; Shawn Devlin, DT, Sr.; Pete Donnelly, G, Soph.; Chris Hutton, WR, Soph.; Bill Powell, WR, Soph.; Bryan Raftery, G, Soph.; Gil Ross, DB, Soph.; Michael Sandy, CB, Jr.; Robert Seeger, FB, Sr.; T.J. Spizzo, OT, Sr.; Kerry Ware, DT, Jr. (RS/injury); Charles Wiley, DB, Soph.; Kevin Williams, DB, Jr.
Top newcomers: Taman Bryant, DB, Fr. (RS); Melvin Cobbs, RB, Fr. (RS); Art Dreher, LB, Soph. (transfer/Georgia Tech); Gary Fauntleroy, RB, Fr. (RS); Wayne Hampton, LB, Fr.; Andy Holland, WR, Jr. (JC); Clint Hunt, OL, Jr. (JC); Marcus Luna, TE, Jr. (JC).
Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Bosher (71 att., 356 yds., 2 TD); Passing: None; Receiving: Harper (35 rec., 417 yds., 7 TD); Tackles: Sheridan (132); Sacks: Swartz (5).
Site: East Brunswick, N.J. **Stadium:** Rutgers (41,500).
Last league title won: None.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—Villanova
 Sept. 7—Navy
 Sept. 12—Miami
 Sept. 21—at Virginia Tech
 Oct. 5—at Syracuse
 Oct. 12—Army
 Oct. 19—at Boston College
 Oct. 26—Temple
 Nov. 9—West Virginia
 Nov. 23—at Notre Dame
 Nov. 30—at Pittsburgh

Michael Vega covers Boston College and the Big East for the Boston Globe.

SCOUTING THE BIG EAST

Ascending: Boston College. All the pieces seem to be in place for the Eagles to soar again. They were ravaged by injuries and inexperience last season (finishing 4-8), but the future looks promising with a talented crop of wide receivers, plenty of live arms at quarterback and an infusion of talented recruits.

Descending: Rutgers. After finishing sixth last season, this will be the season the Scarlet Knights finish last in the league. New coach Terry Shea, who takes over for the embattled Doug Graber, will have to work miracles to match last season's conference win total (two). This team is woefully young and short on talent.

Nightmare schedule: Boston College. The Eagles will rack up the frequent-flyer miles this season. Their grueling 12-game marathon begins with a trip to Hawaii (10,190 miles, round trip) on August 31 and ends with a visit to Miami (3,008 miles) on November 23. In between, BC travels to Michigan, West Virginia, Cincinnati and Pittsburgh. All told, they will travel some 19,000 miles.

Dream schedule: Miami. The Hurricanes won't have to worry about another 1-3 start. Not when their first four games are against Memphis, The Citadel, Rutgers and Pittsburgh. They won't do any heavy lifting until they host Florida State on October 12, but not before pausing for an open date on October 5.

Best matchup of the year: Take your pick. Virginia Tech at Syracuse on September 28 and Virginia Tech at Miami on November 16 could put one of those three teams in the driver's seat for the Big East championship. But Miami's season-ending trip to Syracuse on November 30 likely will settle the matter.

Worst matchup of the year: Rutgers at Notre Dame, November 23. Let's see how Irish coach Lou Holtz talks up the Scarlet Knights in his pregame rhetoric.

Bowl bound: With Miami barred by the NCAA from playing in a bowl last season, the Big East was unable to fill its four bowl slots, but Syracuse and Virginia Tech saved the day with impressive victories in the Gator and Sugar Bowls, respectively. Now that Miami is bowl-eligible again, look for all three of those teams to make a bowl appearance this season. West Virginia and Boston College will duel for the remaining slot.

Biggest shoes to fill: Miami linebacker Ray Lewis. Lewis—basically unrecruited out of high school—once said he'd be considered the greatest linebacker in school history by the time he finished his Hurricanes career. He may have been right. His old job now belongs to senior James Burgess, who was moved from the outside to the middle. True freshman Nathaniel Webster, the most touted high school defender in Miami since Marvin Jones, also will be in the picture.

Most overrated player: Miami wide re-

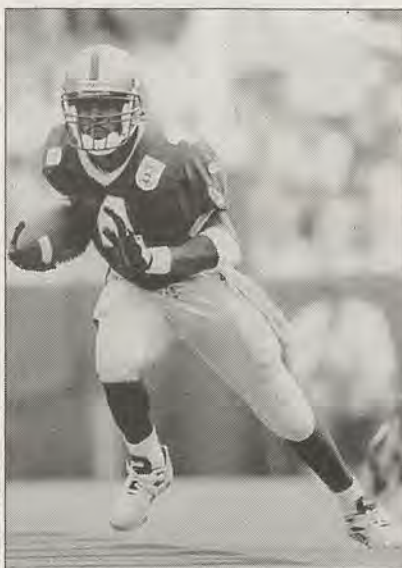
HONOR ROLL

Best offensive backfield:	Syracuse.
Best wide receivers:	Boston College.
Best offensive line:	Virginia Tech.
Best defensive line:	Miami.
Best linebackers:	Syracuse.
Best secondary:	Syracuse.
Best special teams:	Miami.
Hardest hitter:	Donovin Darius, FS, Syracuse.
Best backup quarterback:	Scott Covington, Miami.
Best pro prospect:	Cornell Brown, DE, Virginia Tech.
Best game-day atmosphere:	Boston College.

RANKING THE RECRUITING

Top recruit in parentheses

1. Syracuse (WR Ian McIntosh). Not only did the Orangemen get sophomore running back Kyle McIntosh's younger brother, but they landed standout WR Quinton Spotwood to bolster their receiving corps.
2. Miami (LB Nathaniel Webster)
3. Pitt (OL Ben Kopp)
4. Virginia Tech (K Shayne Graham)
5. Boston College (QB Tim Hasselbeck)
6. West Virginia (OL Kirk Mills)
7. Temple (RB/DB Marko Jackson)
8. Rutgers (LB Wayne Hampton)



Speedy Kenyatta Watson is the kind of talent BC needs to get to become a Big East power.

ceiver Jammi German. German was an All-Big East first-team selection last season after catching 41 passes for 730 yards. But he scored only three touchdowns, giving him six for his career. That's woeful touchdown production for a player who, while in high school in Fort Myers, Fla., was touted as the best prep player in the nation. He now has the added burden of having to overcome a knee injury suffered in spring practice.

Most underrated player: Temple linebacker Alshermund Singleton. Playing alongside future NFLer Lance Johnstone, Singleton still managed to amass 151 tackles last year. That ranked

third in the conference.

Best coach: Virginia Tech's Frank Beamer. His program has benefited more than any other from being affiliated with the Big East, but Beamer has diligently farmed his fertile plot in "Beautiful Blacksburg," as he likes to call his Virginia home, and harvested some nice bowl bids.

Best staff: Syracuse. There is an interesting mix of old and new on the Orangemen staff, from 61-year-old defensive coordinator Norm Gerber to 26-year-old running backs coach David Walker, a former Syracuse player. This is a cohesive unit that always prepares and recruits well.

Coach on the hot seat: Pittsburgh's John Majors. Entering the fourth year of his second tour of duty at Pitt, Majors has led the Panthers on a steady decline. They finished last in the league in '95.

Best bets: Miami's Danyell Ferguson, who rushed for 1,069 yards last year, will make a serious run at another 1,000-yard season. He ranks fifth on Miami's career rushing list but needs a whopping 1,503 yards to pass first-place Ottis Anderson (3,331). He needs only 125 yards to surpass second-place Stephen McGuire. ... Syracuse will become the first Big East school to win 600 games. The Orangemen's all-time record is 599-390-49.

... Virginia Tech's Cornell Brown will be asked to compare his game with that of former Tech defensive end Bruce Smith. ... If Syracuse makes another bowl trip, as expected, coach Paul Pasqualoni will improve his bowl record to 4-0. ... Rutgers coach Terry Shea will question why he ever took the job, if he hasn't already.

Odds and ends: Since winning the first of its four national championships in 1983, Miami has the most wins and best winning percentage of any Division I-A program. The Hurricanes' 134-22 (.859) record over the past 13 years ranks just ahead of Nebraska (133-23-1, .850) and Florida State (125-28-4, .809). The Hurricanes have played in eight national-title games over that span, Nebraska six. ... Syracuse quarterback Donovan McNabb's days on the school's basketball team may be numbered. He reportedly is reconsidering whether he wants to return to the team after not being much of a factor in the Orangemen's run to the NCAA championship game. Basketball commitments forced McNabb to miss several spring football practices. ... Virginia Tech won its final 10 games of last season if you include the Hokies' 28-10 win over Texas in the Sugar Bowl. The school record is 11 in a row. ... Pitt wide receivers coach Gary Nord was offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach under Howard Schnellenberger at Oklahoma last season. ... BC freshman Dave Robbins became the 13th Berwick (Pa.) High quarterback since 1971 to receive a Division I scholarship. He followed current Notre Dame quarterback Ron Powlus.

—MICHAEL VEGA

MOUNTAIN DIVISION

1. UTAH

Offensive strengths: With eight starters back, including blossoming quarterback Mike Fouts, it might be greedy for Utah to hope for much more than to pick up where it left off last season. Yet offensive gluttony is a virtue in the WAC. There might not be a weakness in the Utes' attack, with great receivers in Kevin Dyson and Rocky Henry, a solid line and backs Chris Fuamatu-Ma'afala (all 272 pounds of him) and Juan Johnson keeping things balanced.

Offensive weaknesses: Utah's only real question is at tight end, where Chris Jahries and JC transfer C.J. Johnson are competing for the spot.

Defensive strengths: The Utes have terrific ends in Chad Kauhaahaa and Nate Kia. No Utes linebacker is of the caliber of BYU's Shay Muirbrook, but the team is solid at that position with Taulia Lave (ready to go after a knee injury), Armand Boglin, Brian Gibson, Ben Brown and Chris Godfrey. A strong secondary returns three starters and also adds safety Brandon Dart, who is coming back from a knee injury.

Defensive weaknesses: Few. The Utes must find some tackles to place between Kauhaahaa and Kia, but there are plenty of candidates—headed by Pene Talamaivao.

Special teams: Dan Pulsipher is among the nation's best kickers and punters, and Calbert Beck, a standout cornerback, is an outstanding kick returner.

Key to success: The surprise of the WAC last season, the Utes will have to play as one of the teams to beat this season.

Outlook: Utah thrived as a sleeper last season, having something to prove after playing so long in BYU's shadow. Now, the Utes won't be overlooked. Still, there is more than enough returning talent to repeat last season's success.

UTES DATA

Coach: Ron McBride (41-30, 7 years).

1995 record: 7-4. WAC: 6-2/T1st.

Key losses: Toele Fa'amoe, DT; Henry Kaufusi, DT; Jeff Kirkman, DB; Henry Lusk, FB/WR/TE; Kautai Oleavao, LB; Chris Rae, OT; Rick Tucker, TE; Chad Ventriglia, OT.

Starters returning: **Offense (8):** Kevin Dyson, WR, 6-2/187, Jr.; Mike Fouts, QB, 5-10/165, Sr.; Chris Fuamatu-Ma'afala, FB, 6-1/272, Soph.; Rocky Henry, WR, 6-0/183, Sr.; Todd Jackson, G, 6-3/308, Soph.; Juan Johnson, RB, 6-2/208, Jr.; Barry Sims, G, 6-5/287, Sr.; Darren Walker, G (moved from C), 6-2/261, Soph. **Defense (7):** Armand Boglin, LB, 6-1/200, Sr.; Calbert Beck, CB/KR, 5-9/182, Jr.; Brian Gibson, LB, 6-0/240, Sr.; Chad Kauhaahaa, E, 6-2/253, Sr.; Nate Kia, E, 6-2/242, Sr.; Clarence Lawson, CB, 5-7/168, Jr.; Harold Lusk, FS, 6-0/193, Sr. **Kickers (1):** Dan Pulsipher, P/K, 6-1/175, Sr. **Other key returnees:** Ben Brown, LB, Sr.; Josh Cochran, OT, Soph.; Brandon Dart, SS, Soph. (RS/injury); Chad Folk, C (moved from OT), Sr.; Chris Godfrey, OLB, Jr.; Keith Harrison, FS, Jr. (RS/academics); Jason Hooks, MLB, Jr.; Artis Jackson, CB, Sr.; Chris Jahries, TE, Jr.; Brandon Jones, QB, Sr.; Jeff Kaufusi, DE, Sr. (RS/injury); Terence Keehan, WR, Sr.; Jay Link, OT, Soph. (RS/injury); Mark Livingston, LB, Sr.; Nate Sybrowsky, OT, Soph.; Pene Talamaivao, DT, Jr.

Top newcomers: Darnell Arceneaux, QB, Fr.; Nin Burns, DB, Fr.; Jonathon Crosswhite, QB, Jr. (JC); Mike Harris, DB, Jr. (JC); C.J. Johnson, TE, Jr. (JC); Daniel Jones, WR, Jr. (JC); Taulia Lave, MLB, Fr. (RS/injury).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Fuamatu-Ma'afala (141 att., 834 yds., 9 TD); **Passing:** Fouts (323 att., 179 comp., 12 INT, 18 TD, 2,581 yds.); **Receiving:** Henry (55 rec., 866 yds., 6 TD); **Tackles:** Lusk (82); **Sacks:** Kauhaahaa (7). **Site:** Salt Lake City. **Stadium:** Rice (32,500). **Last league title won:** 1995 (tie).

WAC

Conference Rank: 7

By ANDY BOOGAARD and JONATHAN FEIGEN

PREDICTIONS

MOUNTAIN DIVISION

1. UTAH
2. BRIGHAM YOUNG
3. TULSA
4. SMU
5. RICE
6. TCU
7. NEW MEXICO
8. TEXAS-EL PASO

PACIFIC DIVISION

1. SAN DIEGO STATE
2. WYOMING
3. FRESNO STATE
4. AIR FORCE
5. COLORADO STATE
6. HAWAII
7. SAN JOSE STATE
8. UNLV

League playoff champion: UTAH



Chris Fuamatu-Ma'afala is a big (272-pound) reason Utah should have a good ground attack.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—at Utah State	Oct. 19—Texas Christian
Sept. 7—at Stanford	Oct. 26—Tulsa
Sept. 14—at Southern Methodist	Nov. 2—at Rice
Sept. 21—Fresno State	Nov. 9—at New Mexico
Sept. 28—Kansas	Nov. 23—Brigham Young
Oct. 5—at Texas-El Paso	

2. BRIGHAM YOUNG

Offensive strengths: Steve Sarkisian isn't quite the next Steve Young/Jim McMahon (complete the list at your leisure), but he could close the gap this season. The Cougars have outstanding tight ends in Chad Lewis and Itula Mili, and Sarkisian should keep both busy while breaking in a mostly new backfield.

Offensive weaknesses: For now, it's the people lining up behind Sarkisian. But there are great expectations for freshman Ronney Jenkins, who rushed for a national-record 619 yards in one game in the California prep ranks, and Brian McKenzie, who was the nation's No. 2 JC rusher with 1,776 yards.

Defensive strengths: Led by All-America candidate Shay Muirbrook, BYU is strong at linebacker. The Cougars also are solid in the secondary in the pass-happy WAC—thanks to cornerback Tim McTyer, safety Eddie Sampson (a former walk-on) and coveted JC recruit Omarr Morgan.

Defensive weaknesses: With redshirt freshman Byron Frisch out with a leg fracture at least for the start of the season, the Cougars will be scrambling to fill in on the line around outstanding Henry Bloomfield. Freshman brothers Shane and Issiah Magalei could be ready quickly. They might have to be. End Daren Yancey had a strong spring.

Special teams: Kicker Ethan Pochman, a senior transfer from Washington, will have to step in immediately. Alan Boardman is a solid punter, but BYU is far more exciting when the other team punts (the Cougars' James Dye is one of the nation's top return specialists).

Key to success: Say what you will about the passing-game tradition of the WAC and BYU's contribution to that legacy. If BYU doesn't get its defensive line in order quickly, teams will run all day on LaVell Edwards' team and keep Sarkisian and Co. off the field.

Outlook: The WAC might be the nation's most changed league (without question, it is the largest), but things don't change that much in college football. BYU likely will have a lot to say about the league title, with the tweaking of its defense possibly the key.

COUGARS DATA

Coach: LaVell Edwards (214-80-3, 24 years).

1995 record: 7-4. WAC: 6-2/T1st.

Key losses: Jamie Cook, SS; Elias Faupula, G; Bill Hansen, K; Hema Heimuli, FB; Mike Johnston, WR; Matt Meserve, T; John Raass, DT; Stan Raass, LB; Matt Redden, DE; Dermell Reed, CB; Morris Unutoa, C.

Starters returning: **Offense (7):** Mark Atuaia, RB, 5-10/200, Sr.; James Johnson, T, 6-6/295, Sr.; Chad Lewis, TE, 6-6/235, Sr.; Kaipo McGuire, WR, 5-10/170, Sr.; Itula Mili, TE, 6-3/240, Sr.; Larry Moore, G (may play C), 6-3/290, Sr.; Steve Sarkisian, QB, 6-2/210, Sr. **Defense (7):** Henry Bloomfield, T, 6-3/290, Sr.; Ed Kehl, E, 6-4/265, Soph.; Brad Martin, LB, 6-1/230, Soph.; Tim McTyer, CB, 6-0/180, Sr.; Shay Muirbrook, MLB, 6-1/235, Sr.; Eddie Sampson, FS, 6-2/195, Sr.; Dennis Simmons, LB, 6-4/230, Sr. **Kickers (1):** Alan Boardman, P, 6-0/195, Sr.

Other key returnees: Ben Cahoon, WR, Jr. (RS); Matt Cox, OT, Jr.; James Dye, WR/KR (moved from DB), Sr.; Lane Hale, DB, Sr.; Greg Hoaglund, G, Jr. (RS); Charles Jones, OT, Jr. (RS); K.O. Kealaluhi, WR, Sr.; Jared Kennedy, WR, Jr. (RS); Spencer Reid, LB, Jr.; Jason Walker, DB, Soph.; Daren Yancey, DE, Soph.

Top newcomers: Chris Ellison, DB, Jr. (JC); Bret Engemann, QB, Fr.; Byron Frisch, DE (might miss part of the season because of injury), Fr. (RS); Ronney Jenkins, RB, Fr.; Issiah Magalei, DL, Fr.; Shane Magalei, DL, Fr.; Brian McKenzie, RB, Jr. (JC); Nikia McKinney, DB, Jr. (JC); Omarr Morgan, DB, Jr. (JC); Ethan Pochman, K, Sr. (transfer/ Washington); Aaron Roderick, WR, Jr. (JC); Darin Sagapolu, OL, Jr. (JC); Will Snowden, RB, Fr.; Ned Stearns, RB, Fr. (RS).
Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Atuaia (101 att., 374 yds., 5 TD); Passing: Sarkisian (385 att., 250 comp., 14 INT, 20 TD, 3,437 yds.); Receiving: Mili (36 rec., 440 yds., 3 TD); Tackles: Sampson (105); Sacks: Bloomfield, Muirbrook (3.5).
Site: Provo, Utah. **Stadium:** Cougar (65,000).
Last league title won: 1993 (tie).

SCHEDULE

Aug. 24—Texas A&M (Pigskin Classic)	Oct. 19—at Tulsa
Aug. 31—Arkansas State	Oct. 26—at TCU
Sept. 14—at Washington	Nov. 2—UTEP
Sept. 21—New Mexico	Nov. 9—Rice
Sept. 28—Southern Methodist	Nov. 16—at Hawaii
Oct. 4—at Utah State	Nov. 23—at Utah
Oct. 12—UNLV	

3. TULSA

Offensive strengths: There is all kinds of potential in the backfield. Reggie Williams, possibly out at season's outset with a hip problem, and Solomon White have had their moments when not slowed by injuries. White rushed for 1,003 yards in 1994 and 574 last season; Williams gained 729 yards in seven games in '95. Quarterback Troy DeGar will have to battle John Fitzgerald, who was redshirted last year but started as a freshman two years ago when DeGar went down with an injury. Either will benefit from the presence of receiver Wes Caswell (74 catches in '94), who returns after missing last season with a hamstring injury.

Offensive weaknesses: Other than Caswell, there is little experience among the Golden Hurricane's receivers. And while DeGar continues to hold off Fitzgerald, there is the feeling that Tulsa's passing game still lags behind its recent past.

Defensive strengths: Up the middle, Tulsa is outstanding with Muadianvita Kazadi leading a strong linebacking corps and Jeremy Bunch and converted cornerback Terrance Joseph an imposing combination at safety.

Defensive weaknesses: Tulsa's pass defense fell apart last season, and no one has won the job at either of the increasingly hot corners. Tulsa will try some new faces there—JC transfer Earnest King and converted receiver Marshall Gordon. The pass rush might not offer much help, although end Salifu Abdulhai has potential.

Special teams: James Anderson remains solid in his third season as Tulsa's kicker, and JC recruit Kirk Myrick takes over as the punter. Jason Jacoby is a breakaway threat as a kick returner.

Key to success: The offense needs to come around—and it should. The pass defense has to solidify immediately.

Outlook: The excitement about finally having a conference championship to play for—and the return of Caswell and other key players—could give the Hurricane a huge lift. A Utah-like surprise might be difficult in a 16-team league, but things could turn around for the Hurricane.

GOLDEN HURRICANE DATA

Coach: Dave Rader (38-51-1, 8 years).
1995 record: 4-7 as an independent.
Key losses: Chris Anderson, TE; Coco Butler, DT; Sedric



Brigham Young's Chad Lewis should be one of the best tight ends in the nation this season.

Clark, DE; Mark DeLozier, P; Mark Haberfield, DT; Michael Kedzior, WR; David Millwee, C; John Peters, OLB; Malcolm Williams, OLB.

Starters returning: Offense (8): Jason Bennett, FB, 6-3/209, Jr.; Troy DeGar, QB, 6-1/215, Sr.; Mark Lippe, TE, 6-2/262, Jr.; Brian Newnam, G, 6-4/292, Sr.; Doug Pisula, C (moved from T), 6-3/288, Sr.; Michael Ruhl, T, 6-7/280, Jr.; Brad Smith, G, 6-2/282, Jr.; Solomon White, TB, 5-8/189, Sr. Defense (6): Jeremy Bunch, S, 6-0/207, Sr.; Chris Fowler, OLB, 5-11/210, Sr.; Levi Gillen, S, 5-10/186, Jr.; Terrance Joseph, S (moved from CB), 6-2/218, Jr.; Muadianvita Kazadi, LB, 6-2/236, Sr.; Sean O'Boyle, E, 6-7/261, Jr. Kickers (1): James Anderson, K, 6-0/189, Jr.

Other key returnees: Salifu Abdulhai, DE, Sr.; Andrew Bates, FB (moved from LB), Sr.; Wes Caswell, WR, Jr. (RS/hamstring); Ryan Farley, DT, Soph.; John Fitzgerald, QB, Soph. (RS); Marshall Gordon, CB (moved from WR), Soph.; Jason Jacoby, WR/KR (moved from DB), Jr.; John Lang, DT, Jr. (RS); Tim Martin, DT, Soph.; Jason Mills, OT, Soph.; John Mosley, WR, Soph.; Brian Self, S, Jr.; Jody Sparks, OLB, Jr.; Jeff Utter, WR, Sr.; Nelson Van Waes, DT, Sr.; Reggie Williams, TB, Soph. (might miss part of the season because of injury).

Top newcomers: Todd Franz, CB, Fr. (RS); Charlie Higgins, TB, Fr. (RS); Kevin Isham, TB, Fr.; Earnest King, CB, Jr. (JC/RS); Jeremy McClure, LB, Fr. (RS); Kirk Myrick, P, Jr. (JC); Damon Savage, WR, Fr. (RS); Rich Young, OLB, Jr. (JC).

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Williams (144 att., 729 yds., 4 TD); Passing: DeGar (245 att., 120 comp., 7 INT, 6 TD, 1,304 yds.); Receiving: Bennett (16 rec., 116 yds., 0 TD); Tackles: Kazadi (97); Sacks: O'Boyle (6).
Site: Tulsa, Okla. **Stadium:** Skelly (40,385).
Last league title won: None (first year in WAC).

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—at SMU	Oct. 26—at Utah
Sept. 14—at Oklahoma State	Nov. 2—New Mexico
Sept. 21—Iowa	Nov. 9—TCU
Sept. 28—at Oklahoma	Nov. 16—at Texas-El Paso
Oct. 12—Colorado State	Nov. 23—at Rice
Oct. 19—BYU	

4. SOUTHERN METHODIST

Offensive strengths: SMU started spring practices during the winter—coaches understandably couldn't wait to see make-it-happen quarterback Ramon Flanigan back in action after losing him on the first play of the '95 season. With Flanigan playing be-

hind a solid line and with more talented (if unproven) receivers on hand, SMU's offense should be up to WAC speed.

Offensive weaknesses: SMU hasn't had as many threats at receiver since Flanigan became the triggerman. But only Kevin Thornal, the lone possession-type receiver, has been tested. And though Brannon Kidd and Keith Chiles are among the league's best up front, the line is extremely thin behind the starters.

Defensive strengths: The Mustangs are loaded at inside linebacker, where Chris Bordano led the Southwest Conference in tackles in 1994 and Craig Swann topped the league in 1995 after replacing the injured Bordano. SMU is tough up the middle, with tackles Jason Evans and Ahmad Hayes solid run defenders.

Defensive weaknesses: As strong as SMU is inside, it is questionable outside with untested ends Warwick Woodard and Wendell Wash-

ington and outside linebackers Jackson Moore and Kenneth Imo.

Special teams: For all its problems rebuilding, SMU always seems to have kickers. Daniel Hernandez hasn't tried a field goal or an extra point, but the Mustangs expect him to be as accurate as his predecessors and with a stronger leg. Anthony Scotti is a solid punter.

Key to success: The Mustangs have their best collection of standout players since their 1989 return from the NCAA death penalty but remain terribly thin. Injuries have crippled SMU for several seasons and could turn the Mustangs from legitimate contenders into also-rans.

Outlook: With Flanigan back, the Mustangs believe they can contend in the WAC. Flanigan and running back Donte Womack should provide more than enough offense, but the defense could be lit up by the WAC's passing offenses.

MUSTANGS DATA

Coach: Tom Rossley (10-42-3, 5 years).

1995 record: 1-10. SWC: 0-7/8th.

Key losses: Derek Canine, QB; Ben Crosland, K; Ken Neill, FS; Cornell Parker, CB; Eric Tomlin, LB; Rodney Townsend, OT; James Whitmore, WR.

Starters returning: Offense (8): Keith Chiles, G (may play C), 6-0/340, Sr.; Rafiq Cooper, WR, 6-0/185, Soph.; Bryan Harmon, RB, 5-9/195, Jr.; Jason Holz, T, 6-8/285, Sr.; Brannon Kidd, C (may play T), 6-4/295, Sr.; Kevin Thornal, WR, 6-3/180, Sr.; Dray Wilson, G, 6-3/250, Soph.; Donte Womack, RB, 5-8/185, Jr. Defense (8): Jason Evans, T, 6-4/265, Jr.; Jay Harvey, S, 5-11/170, Sr.; Ahmad Hayes, T, 6-2/280, Jr.; Chad Kollar, S, 6-2/195, Soph.; Mac McKinnie, T, 6-4/240, Sr.; Wilbert Mitchell, T, 6-3/260, Sr.; Jackson Moore, OLB, 6-4/240, Jr.; Craig Swann, ILB, 5-11/230, Sr. Kickers (1): Anthony Scotti, P, 6-3/190, Jr.

Other key returnees: Kelsey Adams, QB, Sr.; Chris Bordano, ILB, Jr. (RS/back); Dewey Evans, CB, Soph.; Ramon Flanigan, QB, Sr. (RS/hip); Lamont Guillory, WR, Soph.; Daniel Hernandez, K, Jr.; Kenneth Imo, OLB, Soph.; Glenn Ivey, OT, Jr.; Albert Johnson, WR, Soph.; Donald Mitchell, CB, Soph.; Wendell Washington, DE, Soph.;

PRESEASON All-WAC TEAM

PLAYERS OF THE YEAR

OFFENSE



GEORGE JONES
RB, San Diego St.

DEFENSE



HAROLD LUSK
S, Utah

NEWCOMERS OF THE YEAR

OFFENSE: Michael Gray, RB, Fresno State
DEFENSE: Omar Morgan, CB, BYU

FIRST TEAM

OFFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
WR	WILL BLACKWELL, San Diego State	6-0/180	Jr.
WR	MARCUS HARRIS, Wyoming	6-2/214	Sr.
TE	CHAD LEWIS, BYU	6-6/235	Sr.
T	STEVE SCIFRES, Wyoming	6-5/286	Sr.
T	KYLE TURLEY, San Diego State	6-6/305	Jr.
G	LARRY MOORE, BYU	6-3/290	Sr.
G	KEITH CHILES, SMU	6-0/340	Sr.
C	RYAN TUCKER, TCU	6-6/290	Sr.
QB	BEAU MORGAN, Air Force	5-11/187	Sr.
RB	GEORGE JONES, San Diego State	5-9/210	Sr.
RB	CHRIS FUAMATU-MA'AFALA, Utah	6-1/272	Soph.

DEFENSE

E	CHAD KAUAHAAHA, Utah	6-2/253	Sr.
T	CAMERON CURRY, Air Force	6-5/260	Sr.
T	HENRY BLOOMFIELD, BYU	6-3/290	Sr.
E	NDUKWE KALU, Rice	6-4/245	Sr.
LB	SHAY MUIRBROOK, BYU	6-1/235	Sr.
LB	MICHAEL COMER, UTEP	5-9/260	Sr.
LB	CHRIS BORDANO, SMU	6-2/230	Jr.
CB	RICKY PARKER, San Diego State	6-1/205	Sr.
CB	WARRICK FRANKLIN, Rice	5-10/180	Sr.
S	HAROLD LUSK, Utah	6-0/193	Sr.
S	OMAR STOUTMIRE, Fresno State	5-11/195	Sr.

SPECIALISTS

K	MICHAEL REEDER, TCU	6-0/162	Jr.
P	TUCKER PHILLIPS, Rice	6-2/210	Sr.
KR	JAMES DYE, BYU	5-9/150	Sr.

SECOND TEAM

OFFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
WR	BRIAN ROBERSON, Fresno State	5-10/170	Sr.
WR	JOHN WASHINGTON, TCU	5-9/165	Sr.
TE	JUSTIN SHULL, Colorado State	6-3/262	Sr.
T	ALLEN WEATHERS, Fresno State	6-4/310	Sr.
T	MATT TYNER, New Mexico	6-3/291	Jr.
G	JAY KORTH, Wyoming	6-4/280	Jr.
G	CARLTON HENDRIX, Air Force	6-3/260	Sr.
C	BRANDON TURNER, New Mexico	6-3/283	Sr.
QB	RAMON FLANIGAN, SMU	6-2/175	Sr.
RB	DAMON WASHINGTON, Colorado St.	6-1/190	Soph.
RB	LEN SEXTON, Wyoming	5-11/171	Sr.

DEFENSE

E	NATE KIA, Utah	6-2/242	Sr.
T	GAYLON HYDER, TCU	6-6/285	Sr.
E	BUDDY BILLINGSLEY, New Mexico	6-4/241	Sr.
LB	CRAIG SWANN, SMU	5-11/230	Sr.
LB	NATE KVAMME, Colorado State	6-1/210	Soph.
LB	CRAIGUS THOMPSON, San Diego St.	6-1/230	Sr.
LB	MUADIANVITA KAZADI, Tulsa	6-2/236	Sr.
CB	TIM McTYNER, BYU	6-0/180	Sr.
CB	LEE VAUGHN, Wyoming	5-11/174	Sr.
S	JEREMY BUNCH, Tulsa	6-0/207	Sr.
S	BILLY AUSTIN, New Mexico	5-10/187	Jr.

SPECIALISTS

K	DAN PULSIPHER, Utah	6-1/175	Sr.
P	NOEL PREFONTAINE, San Diego St.	6-0/200	Sr.
KR	BRIAN ROBERSON, Fresno State	5-10/170	Sr.

Warwick Woodard, DE, Jr.

Top newcomers: Damond Blueitt, WR, Fr. (RS); Chad Cione, RB, Fr.; Wes Danaher, RB, Fr.; Bill Holder, OT, Fr. (RS); Rodrick Phillips, RB, Fr.; Tim Pound, LB, Fr.; Chris Sanders, QB, Fr.; Chad Sennette, CB, Fr. (RS).

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Womack (208 att., 758 yds., 3 TD); Passing: Mark Humble (65 att., 27 comp., 3 INT, 1 TD, 313 yds.); Receiving: Thornal (44 rec., 531 yds., 6 TD); Tackles: Swann (167); Sacks: Swann (4).
Site: Dallas. Stadium: Cotton Bowl (68,252).

Last league title won: None (first year in WAC).

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—Tulsa	Oct. 19—at Rice
Sept. 7—at Arkansas	Oct. 26—New Mexico
Sept. 14—Utah	Nov. 2—at Wyoming
Sept. 21—at Navy	Nov. 9—at Texas-El Paso
Sept. 28—at Brigham Young	Nov. 21—Texas Christian
Oct. 5—Missouri	

5. RICE

Offensive strengths: See last season. See every season under Ken Hatfield, at every school at which he has coached. The Owls will run the ball often and well. This season, Spencer George moves back to tailback from fullback, where he never looked comfortable. The emergence of Jamey Whitlock and the arrival of Clemson transfer Benji Wood should fill the fullback spot.

Offensive weaknesses: See last season—again. Rice's passing game ranked 103rd in the nation, and not even the presence of Josh LaRocca for seven games (before a season-ending injury) could change that. Chad Nelson and Raphael Tillman, good option runners, were no threat as passers and now hold the position.

Defensive strengths: End Ndukwe Kalu should be one of the league's best pass rushers. Rice will be well suited to the

move to the WAC with a strong secondary, led by cornerback Warrick Franklin. LaDoughyous McCalla (formerly Shaw) had a good season at the other corner after knee surgery and could be ready to blossom.

Defensive weaknesses: Rice desperately missed Joe Davis when he was hurt last season and now must carry on without him and fellow linebacking star Larry Izzo. Derrick Williams will have to fill the void. There are hopes that another linebacker, Thomas Benford, will develop after playing as a true freshman last season.

Special teams: Tucker Phillips was among the nation's top punters last season, overshadowing a solid year by kicker Mike Ruff. Michael Perry showed signs of becoming an explosive return specialist.

Key to success: Rice never will be BYU, at least under Hatfield, but it must develop a passing threat to exploit the things it can do while running the ball.

Outlook: Hatfield has made people believe Rice can win again, no small accomplishment after compiling a 7-14-1 record in two seasons. The Owls could take the next step if the defense overachieves, allowing the offense to run its time-killing, ball-control scheme.

OWLS DATA

Coach: Ken Hatfield (7-14-1, 2 years; 120-76-4 overall, 17 years).

1995 record: 2-8-1. SWC: 1-6/7th.

Key losses: Adrayll Askew, TE; Joe Davis, OLB; Bobby Dixon, CB; Yoncy Edmonds, RB; Brynton Goynes, DT; Larry Izzo, OLB; Jay Lamy, S; Josh LaRocca, QB; Eric Ober, OT; Jeff Sowell, S.

Starters returning: Offense (6): Mark Spinner, T, 6-2/270, Jr.; Jeremy Thigpen, C, 6-0/265, Sr.; Charles Torello, G,

6-1/280, Soph.; Jeff Venghaus, WR, 6-0/180, Jr.; Mike Vietor, G, 6-0/265, Soph.; Jamey Whitlock, FB, 6-0/210, Sr. **Defense** (5): Andy Clifton, E, 6-2/240, Jr.; Warrick Franklin, CB, 5-10/180, Sr.; Ndukwe Kalu, E, 6-4/245, Sr.; Larry Thompson, NT, 5-9/255, Jr.; Derrick Williams, MLB, 6-1/235, Sr. **Kickers** (2): Tucker Phillips, P, 6-2/210, Sr.; Mike Ruff, K, 5-10/180, Sr. **Other key returnees:** Thomas Benford, LB, Soph.; Spencer George, TB (moved from FB), Sr.; Byron Godfrey, RB, Jr.; Keilone Gordon, RB, Soph.; Shan Jackson, OT (moved from TE), Soph.; Lyndon Lee, S, Soph.; LaDoughyous McCalla (name changed from Shaw), CB, Soph.; Chad Nelson, QB, Jr.; Paki Nelson, G, Jr.; Rashad Reynolds, LB, Soph.; Aaron Stanley, S, Sr.; Russell Streeter, NG, Jr.; Raphael Tillman, QB,



SMU is hoping for an injury-free season from do-it-all quarterback Ramon Flanigan.



Reggie Williams had a successful freshman season for Tulsa, rushing for 729 yards.

Soph.; Jason Winship, NT, Sr.

Top newcomers: Yinka Adeniji, LB, Fr. (RS/Injury); Karlon Bedford, DB, Fr. (RS); Anthony Griffin, RB, Fr.; Scott Grimes, K/P, Fr.; Clint Leschber, QB, Fr.; Travis Ortega, QB, Fr.; Chad Richardson, QB, Fr.; Larry Ruffin, DB, Fr. (RS); Aaron Sandoval, OL, Fr.; Benji Wood, FB, Jr. (transfer/Clemson). **Returning statistical leaders:** Rushing: Whitlock (76 att., 395 yds., 7 TD); Passing: Tillman (32 att., 17 comp., 3 INT, 0 TD, 189 yds.); Receiving: Venghaus (22 rec., 371 yds., 1 TD); Tackles: Franklin (52); Sacks: Kalu (7). **Site:** Houston. **Stadium:** Rice (70,000).

Last league title won: None (first year in WAC).

SCHEDULE

Sept. 7—at Ohio State	Oct. 26—at Texas-El Paso
Sept. 14—at Tulane	Nov. 2—Utah
Sept. 21—Kansas State	Nov. 9—at Brigham Young
Sept. 28—at Air Force	Nov. 16—at Texas Christian
Oct. 5—New Mexico	Nov. 23—Tulsa
Oct. 19—Southern Methodist	

6. TEXAS CHRISTIAN

Offensive strengths: Most of the line is solid. Center Ryan Tucker is, in fact, dominant—one of the nation's top linemen. At 290 pounds (at least), Tucker still looks and runs like the tight end he was when he began his career. Receiver John Washington still looks and runs like a sprinter and should be an outstanding deep threat if TCU can come up with someone to get him the ball.

Offensive weaknesses: The search for Andre Davis' tailback successor has gone well. Basil Mitchell, a sophomore who sat out last season, was outstanding in the spring, and Sterling Boyd is coming off his best spring after several years in which he didn't live up to his billing. Still, neither player is Davis. And none of four quarterbacks—including redshirt freshmen Royce Huffman and Jeff Dover—has reminded anyone of Max Knake, the departed TCU record-setter. A fifth candidate, JC transfer Fred Taylor, might step in.

Defensive strengths: TCU could have one of the best lines in the WAC if ends Chance McCarty and Matt Harper (who lettered at Stanford in 1993) blossom as ex-

pected. Gaylon Hyder already is a force inside, and Bernard Oldham is solid, too.

Defensive weaknesses: Scott Taft and Geoff Stephens are good linebackers, but neither is the force or the playmaker that Lenoy Jones was for three seasons. And the secondary remains shaky, though there are hopes for Oklahoma State transfer Barry Browning.

Special teams: Michael Reeder was the nation's top kicker last season—he made 23-of-25 field-goal attempts—and will try to add duties as a punter. Washington is a national honors candidate as a kick returner.

Key to success: Pat Sullivan likes a balanced, conservative offense. Still, the coach would like to have a quarterback who can throw at least as well as he can 25 years after winning his Heisman. The TCU line is good—but not good enough to move the ball on the ground if someone doesn't provide a legitimate passing threat.

Outlook: TCU's defense is improving but can't carry the team. If Taylor is the answer at quarterback, he will find—as Knake did—plenty of targets.

HORNED FROGS DATA

Coach: Pat Sullivan (19-25-1, 4 years).

1995 record: 6-5. SWC: 3-4/5th.

Key losses: Clifford Barnes, OT; Chris Brasfield, FL; Kevin Brewer, G; Brian Collins, TE; Andre Davis, TB; Lenoy Jones, ILB; Max Knake, QB; Rick LaFavers, FS; Chuckie McWilliams, CB; Chris Piland, DE; Tyrone Roy, ILB; Hayes Rydel, DE; Beau Stephens, P.

Starters returning: Offense (5): Mark Cortez, T, 6-3/290, Jr.; Fabian Stegall, G, 6-3/270, Sr.; Ryan Tucker, C, 6-6/290, Sr.; John Washington, WR, 5-9/165, Sr.; Koi Woods, FB, 6-0/225, Jr. **Defense (5):** Gaylon Hyder, T, 6-5/285, Sr.; Bernard Oldham, NT, 6-2/280, Sr.; Chris Staten, SS, 5-11/172, Soph.; Geoff Stephens, OLB, 6-0/215, Sr.; Godfrey White, CB, 5-10/180, Jr. **Kickers (1):** Michael Reeder, K, 6-0/162, Jr.

Other key returnees: Cedric Allen, CB, Sr.; Sterling Boyd, TB, Sr.; Tony Brown, OLB, Sr.; Jay Davern, OLB, Jr. (RS/medical); Greg Davis, OT, Soph.; Chance McCarty, DE, Jr.; Basil Mitchell, TB, Soph. (RS); Joseph Phipps, SS (moved from LB), Soph. (RS); Ashby Porter, LB, Sr.; James Smith, G, Soph.; Todd Stanford, QB, Jr.; Scott Taft, MLB, Jr.; Jason Tucker, WR, Jr.; Travis Wilson, TE, Soph.

Top newcomers: Barry Browning, FS, Soph.

(transfer/Oklahoma State); Garth Davies, QB, Jr. (JC); Jeff Dover, QB, Fr. (RS); Matt Harper, DE, Jr. (JC/RS); Royce Huffman, QB, Fr. (RS); Reggie Hunt, RB, Fr.; Akili Johnson, DE, Fr. (RS); Doug Loeser, G, Jr. (JC); Torrie Simmons, WR, Fr. (RS); Fred Taylor, QB, Jr. (JC); John Williams, FB, Fr. (RS); Kyle Williams, TE, Fr. (RS).

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Woods (74 att., 347 yds., 2 TD); Passing: None; Receiving: Washington (52 rec., 699 yds., 6 TD); Tackles: Stephens (80); Sacks: Six tied with 1. **Site:** Fort Worth, Texas. **Stadium:** Amon G. Carter (46,000). **Last league title won:** None (first year in WAC).

SCHEDULE

Sept. 7—at Oklahoma	Oct. 26—Brigham Young
Sept. 14—Kansas	Nov. 2—UNLV
Sept. 28—at New Mexico	Nov. 9—at Tulsa
Oct. 5—at Tulane	Nov. 16—Rice
Oct. 12—Texas-El Paso	Nov. 21—at SMU
Oct. 19—at Utah	

7. NEW MEXICO

Offensive strengths: Led by Brandon Turner and Matt Tyner, New Mexico should have a formidable line, which returns intact. The situation up front figures to allow Dennis Franchione to open things up for quarterback Donald Sellers, especially while New Mexico tries to rebuild in the backfield.

Offensive weaknesses: Tailback Winslow Oliver (915 yards, 5.6 yards per carry) will be missed, but a large group of

THE PRESSURE'S ON

Flanigan must win—and put fans in the seats

There is a potential for greatness on every play. But SMU needs more from quarterback Ramon Flanigan.

Yes, the Mustangs have shown signs of life around Flanigan, but that hasn't been enough to lift the school's football program from the ignominy of being ignored in Dallas. It has been a long, hard climb back for SMU after it received the death penalty almost a decade ago (because of rules infractions, the university didn't field football teams in 1987 and 1988). Flanigan is what has been missing, lost on the first play of the 1995 season because of a dislocated hip but back now—and apparently ready to play at full strength and top speed.

It's difficult for a team to attract attention when it compiles 1-9-1 and 1-10 records, as the Mustangs have done in the past two seasons. But a healthy Flanigan might change all that.

"He's a playmaker, exciting, fun to watch," SMU coach Tom Rossley says. "He gets people out of their seats. Sometimes I see him and I'm just a fan, watching."

As the Mustangs move from the storied Southwest Conference to the far-flung Western Athletic Conference, Flanigan remains the key to their chances. More than that, this scrambling blur of a run-and-shoot operative is SMU's No. 1 hope of drawing fans to its Cotton Bowl home field the way Doak Walker did generations ago, long before everything came crashing down.

"We have to win, but we also have to put on a show," Rossley says. "But if he (Flanigan) has two or three games in which he puts on the Ramon show, people will hear—and come to watch."

SMU's football-playing survival might depend on Flanigan's ability to draw fans. And Flanigan understands this, even if his first priority is to avoid the physical misfortune that has plagued him.

"It's been frustrating, the knock of me not being durable when they've all been freak accidents (hip, hamstring, shoulder and thumb injuries and mononucleosis)," says Flanigan, who passed for six touchdowns and ran for 12 more in 1994. "But I feel stronger now because of the year off. And with me back, and our schedule now something we can handle, we have a chance."

"People just have to come out. Then they'll see. We'll take care of the rest." ♦

—JONATHAN FEIGEN



Flanigan

candidates and an experienced line should make replacing him easier.

Defensive strengths: New coordinator Gary Patterson will build his attacking-style defense around inside linebackers Blake Irwin and Daniel Johnson, with linebacker/safety hybrid Antoine Wright and end Buddy Billingsley playing key roles, too. The Lobos also are strong at safety, manned by Scott McGarrahan and Billy Austin.

Defensive weaknesses: The young and thin line will count heavily on redshirt freshmen Travis Journagan and Frans Dinkelmann.

Special teams: Kicker Colby Cason was inconsistent last season but did show potential. Jason Bloom was a solid punter. Franchione hopes Larry Brown can replace Oliver as a return specialist.

Key to success: The young defensive line must develop immediately. In Patterson's scheme, the line doesn't have to carry the defense, but it must keep opposing lines off the linebackers.

Outlook: Franchione will keep the offense going, especially with a strong line and good quarterback at his disposal. But the defense might continue to struggle in a strong offensive league. And though solid, the offense isn't going to outscore opponents very often.

LOBOS DATA

Coach: Dennis Franchione (18-27, 4 years; 98-46-2 overall, 13 years).

1995 record: 4-7. WAC: 2-6/T7th.

Key losses: Art Celestine, CB; Chris Griffin, TE; Steve Malonson, DT (illness); Coby Mansell, P; Winslow Oliver, TB; Steve Pagador, WR; Terrence Sharper, CB; Roston Thomas, OLB.

Starters returning: **Offense (7):** Andy Gleason, G, 6-5/292, Sr.; Shane Jaeger, T, 6-2/272, Jr.; Kevin Ned, G, 6-3/342, Sr.; Donald Sellers, QB, 6-1/180, Sr.; Chris Shelton, FB, 5-10/230, Jr.; Brandon Turner, C, 6-3/283, Sr.; Matt Tyner, T, 6-3/291, Jr. **Defense (7):** Billy Austin, FS, 5-10/187, Jr.; Buddy Billingsley, E, 6-4/241, Sr.; Corbin Epps, NT, 5-10/255, Soph.; Blake Irwin, ILB, 6-0/219, Jr.; Daniel Johnson, ILB, 5-11/225, Sr.; Scott McGarrahan, S, 6-1/198, Soph.; Antoine Wright, LB/SS, 6-0/220, Soph. **Kickers (2):** Jason Bloom, P, 6-5/190, Soph.; Colby Cason, K, 5-10/197, Jr.

Other key returnees: Jeremy Banks, TE, Sr.; Larry Brown, WR, Sr.; Chris Carroll, DE, Sr.; Chili Davis, CB, Sr.; Barrett Garrison, DT, Soph.; Tommy Hemphill, TE, Soph.; Che' Johnson, TB, Soph.; Bertrand Martin, WR, Jr.; Derrick Milner, CB, Soph.; Jamie Oliver, CB (moved from WR), Jr. (RS); Milton Thomas, WR, Sr.; Chris Wallace, G, Soph. (RS); John Wingate, DE, Jr.; Jameal Woods, CB, Jr.

Top newcomers: Jason Carson, OT, Fr. (RS); Frans Dinkelmann, DT, Fr. (RS); Tony Doran, TE, Jr. (JC); Isamu Falevai, DL, Jr. (JC); Travis Journagan, DT, Fr. (RS); Dion Marion, RB, Jr. (JC); Jason Purvis, DE, Fr. (RS); Reggie Sampson, SS, Fr. (RS); Martinez Williams, WR, Fr. (RS). **Returning statistical leaders:** Rushing: Sellers (134 att., 494 yds., 8 TD); Passing: Sellers (195 att., 121 comp., 3 INT, 11 TD, 1,693 yds.); Receiving: Banks (19 rec., 290 yds., 2 TD); Tackles: Johnson (120); Sacks: Epps (6).

Site: Albuquerque. **Stadium:** University (31,218). **Last league title won:** 1964.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—at New Mexico State	Oct. 19—San Diego State
Sept. 7—Northern Arizona	Oct. 26—at SMU
Sept. 14—Central Florida	Nov. 2—at Tulsa
Sept. 21—at Brigham Young	Nov. 9—Utah
Sept. 28—Texas Christian	Nov. 23—Texas-El Paso
Oct. 5—at Rice	

8. TEXAS-EL PASO

Offensive strengths: We're looking. Actually, that's not quite fair. John Rayborn struggled last season, but no more than would be expected of a freshman quarterback. And he did show signs of better



UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS-EL PASO

Texas-El Paso's Michael Comer is a tackling machine: He had 152 for the Miners last year.

things, particularly in the spring. And though tailback Toraino Singleton is gone, Joseph Polk should be a solid successor. Slotback Cedric Johnson might develop into a big-play receiving threat if Rayborn gets adequate protection.

Offensive weakness: UTEP must rebuild a struggling line, although there are hopes for freshman Robert Carter and JC transfer Brad Davis.

Defensive strengths: The Miners begin with Michael Comer, one of the most consistent forces in the linebacker-strong WAC, and add talented Dale Kirry and transfer Matt Kennedy to an outstanding collection of linebackers. The Miners have four experienced players in the secondary—Ray Bailie, David Terrell, Darius Ellison and Michael Hicks.

Defensive weaknesses: The success of new coordinator Bill Clay's switch to a 3-4 might depend greatly on Phillip Hippolyte's performance at nose tackle. Jason Dixon will have to play well at end to keep foes off the linebackers.

Special teams: Cedric Johnson holds school records for career and season return yardage. Jon Olsen, a good punter last season, will try to be a good kicker as well this season.

Key to success: It's not enough to simply replace Singleton, which is challenge enough, but UTEP must rebuild the offensive line and hope Rayborn grows with it.

Outlook: It could be another tough season. Contrary to reputation, some teams have relied upon defense and won in the WAC. But UTEP's defense isn't ready for such a task, and the offense isn't ready to win consistently, either.

MINERS DATA

Coach: Charlie Bailey (5-17-1, 2 years; 17-27-3 overall, 5 years).

1995 record: 2-10. WAC: 1-7/10th.

Key losses: Alvin Black, WR; Lawrence Brown, FB; Raymond Lindholm, CB; Chris Pikes, CB; Aaron Plante, OLB; Toraino

Singleton, TB; Jesse Villarreal, G; Marshall Young, K. **Starters returning:** **Offense (6):** Jason Blair, TE, 6-5/262, Sr.; Keith Boyd, C, 6-3/284, Sr.; Nick Griego, G, 6-3/280, Sr.; Cedric Johnson, RB, 5-7/173, Sr.; John Rayborn, QB, 6-2/205, Soph.; Anwar White, T, 6-6/285, Jr. **Defense (8):** Ray Bailie, SS/CB, 5-10/177, Sr.; Michael Comer, ILB, 5-9/260, Sr.; Jason Dixon, E, 6-1/260, Sr.; John Houser, NT, 6-2/242, Jr.; Best Iheghborow, E, 6-2/240, Sr.; Andrew Kelley, OLB, 6-1/216, Soph.; Dale Kirry, ILB, 6-0/229, Soph.; David Terrell, FS, 6-2/172, Jr. **Kickers (1):** Jon Olsen, K/P, 6-1/163, Sr. **Other key returnees:** Jack Bumgardner, DE, Sr.; Jimmy Carpenter, WR, Soph.; Darius Ellison, CB, Soph.; Al Gonzalez, SS, Jr.; Aaron Grinstead, DE, Sr.; Matt Hickl, QB, Soph.; Michael Hicks, CB, Soph. (RS); Phillip Hippolyte, NT, Sr.; Terrence Johnson, RB, Jr. (RS/injury); Leonard Lija, QB, Jr.; DeAndros Long, CB, Sr.; Joseph Polk, RB, Soph.; Jesus Renteria, OT, Sr.; Tony Rodriguez, TE, Sr. (RS/academics); Abdul Stewart, G, Sr.; Hal Stansbury, RB, Soph.; Yancy Turner, OT, Soph.

Top newcomers: Terrance Blaine, LB, Jr. (JC); Robert Carter, G, Fr.; Carey Clayton, OLB, Fr.; Brad Davis, G, Jr. (JC); Mike Deal, DE, Soph. (Prop 48); Elzie Johnson, RB, Fr.; Matt Kennedy, LB, Jr. (JC); Pat Norris, RB, Jr. (JC); Mike Pry, C, Fr. (RS); Tony Wallace, NT, Jr. (JC).

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Rayborn (111 att., 256 yds., 4 TD); Passing: Rayborn (295 att., 156 comp., 13 INT, 16 TD, 1,913 yds.); Receiving: Johnson (28 rec., 479 yds., 5 TD); Tackles: Comer (152); Sacks: Dixon (5). **Site:** El Paso, Texas. **Stadium:** Sun Bowl (52,000). **Last league title won:** None.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—at Arizona	Oct. 12—at Texas Christian
Sept. 14—New Mexico State	Oct. 26—Rice
Sept. 21—at San Jose State	Nov. 2—at Brigham Young
Sept. 28—at Northern Illinois	Nov. 9—Southern Methodist
Oct. 5—Utah	Nov. 16—Tulsa
Nov. 23—at New Mexico	

PACIFIC DIVISION

1. SAN DIEGO STATE

Offensive strengths: Try these: 1. All-American running back George Jones. 2. Two 1,000-yard receivers in Will Blackwell and Az Hakim. 3. Three-year starting quarterback Billy Blanton. 4. Four returning starters in the line, including gifted tackle Kyle Turley. All from an outfit that ranked seventh nationally in total offense (482.1 yards per game) and 12th in scoring (33.4 points per outing). Jones, who set a WAC season rushing record, was a popular subject for pro scouts in spring practice.

Offensive weaknesses: Dig deep and one could say depth behind Blackwell and Hakim is suspect. But even that's a reach with the presence of Taj Johnson, a Miami Hurricanes transfer.

Defensive strengths: The entire back seven returns from a defense that yielded fewer than 30 points a game (23.6) for only the second time in nine years. While that is considered poor on a national scale, the figure is one worthy of championships in the fast-break WAC. All-league cornerback Ricky Parker headlines a secondary that helped the team lead the nation in interceptions (26). James Heggins is a valuable addition, coming over from the disbanded Pacific program. Craig Thompson is a force at linebacker.

Defensive weaknesses: There are major question marks in the line, where three of four starters must be replaced. Even with a veteran crew last year, the Aztecs were mauled on the ground (371 yards) by Wyoming in a late home loss that tainted the program's first winning season since 1991. The front was a recruiting priority, with JC tackle Cam Chance being the prize catch.

Special teams: Punter Noel Prefontaine and kicker Peter Holt return. Prefontaine's 43-yard average ranked 13th nationally. Holt, who will have to fight to keep his job, made 11-of-16 field-goal attempts but missed seven of 47 conversion tries.

Key to success: Blanton's performance in big games. His three-interception outing in a defeat at BYU spoiled an otherwise phenomenal season. His supporting cast is so deep that Billy doesn't have to be a hero—merely good. And he surely has the ability to be that.

Outlook: San Diego State's down-the-stretch collapses have become a bad joke. Interestingly, this season marks the 10th anniversary of the Aztecs' only championship as an 18-year WAC member. They have the talent and schedule to chase title No. 2. If San Diego State prevails against Colorado State on October 26 in its lone tough WAC road game, an 8-0 league record and a Pacific Division crown are real possibilities.

AZTECS DATA

Coach: Ted Tollner (12-11, 2 years; 38-31-1 overall, 6 years). **1995 record:** 8-4. WAC: 5-3/5th.

Key losses: Avo Avelisyan, DE; Roger Blake, DT; Chris Finch, G; La'Roi Glover, DT; DeAndre Maxwell, RB; Zach Smith, TE.

Starters returning: **Offense (8):** Will Blackwell, WR, 6-0/180, Jr.; Billy Blanton, QB, 6-0/190, Sr.; Az Hakim, WR, 5-10/175, Jr.; George Jones, RB, 5-9/210, Sr.; Dan Nilsen, C, 6-4/290, Jr.; Ephraim Salaam, T, 6-7/290, Jr.; Kyle Turley, T, 6-6/305, Jr.; Robert Whitman, G, 6-3/305, Jr. **Defense (8):** Adrian Iloja, E, 6-3/255, Sr.; Sam Lawanson, OLB, 6-0/230, Sr.; Eric Lewis, CB, 5-7/155, Soph.; Julius McChristian, SS, 5-10/195, Jr.; Jason Moore, FS, 5-10/180, Jr.; Ricky Parker, CB, 6-1/205, Sr.; Craig Thompson, OLB, 6-1/230, Sr.; Joe Tuipala, MLB, 6-1/235, Soph. **Kickers (2):** Peter Holt, K, 5-10/170, Sr.; Noel Prefontaine, P, 6-0/200, Sr.

Other key returnees: Femi Ayanbadejo, TE, Sr.; LeAndrew Childs, WR, Jr. (RS/academics); Diallo Garrison, DT, Jr.; Darcel Glover, LB, Sr.; Joe Jackson, LB, Soph.; Jason Jones, DE, Sr.; Kevin McKechnie, QB, Jr.; Derek Norman, LB, Jr. (RS/academics); Steve Robinson, CB, Jr.; Nio Santos, DT, Jr.; Justin Watson, RB, Jr.

Top newcomers: Cam Chance, DT, Jr. (JC); Dan Dorsey, DT, Jr. (JC); Chad Flick, TE, Jr. (JC); Charles Gilmore, DL, Jr. (JC); Marty Graham, RB, Fr.; James Heggins, CB, Jr. (transfer/Pacific); Taj Johnson, WR, Jr. (transfer/Miami, Fla.); Jason Mahaffey, WR, Jr. (JC); Mike Malano, G, Fr. (RS); Jesus Reyes, WR, Jr. (transfer/Northern Arizona); James Stewart, CB, Jr. (JC).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Jones (305 att., 1,842 yds., 23 TD); **Passing:** Blanton (389 att., 243 comp., 14 INT, 23 TD, 3,300 yds.); **Receiving:** Blackwell (86 rec., 1,207 yds., 8 TD); **Tackles:** Thompson (99); **Sacks:** Iloja (6).

Site: San Diego. **Stadium:** Jack Murphy (61,121).

Last league title won: 1986.

SCHEDULE

Sept. 7—Idaho	Oct. 26—at Colorado State
Sept. 14—at California	Nov. 2—at San Jose State
Sept. 21—Oklahoma	Nov. 9—Wyoming
Oct. 5—Air Force	Nov. 16—at UNLV
Oct. 12—Hawaii	Nov. 23—Fresno State
Oct. 19—at New Mexico	

2. WYOMING

Offensive strengths: If it's possible to be a Heisman Trophy contender in Laramie, Wyo., Marcus Harris is the man. Deceptively fast, Harris has a good shot to become the first player in NCAA history to produce three consecutive 1,400-yard receiving seasons. Josh Wallwork will get the ball to him, running back Len Sexton will take the heat off the passing game and the best offensive line in school history (led by tackle Steve Scifres) will make things convenient for everyone.

Offensive weaknesses: They don't get

much bigger than Sexton (5-11, 171 pounds) in a backfield that lacks a horse for the Cowboys to ride in short-yardage situations. Tight end troubles may continue. And there's not the type of overall speed to stretch a defense. Still, six-year coach Joe Tiller always seems to find a way to put up big numbers.

Defensive strengths: Middle linebacker Jim Talich and cornerback Lee Vaughn stoke a unit that returns all but three starters from a group that soared to second in total defense and first in pass defense in the WAC under first-year coordinator Brock Spack. The secondary remains intact after surrendering only eight touchdown passes in '95. That's amazing in the WAC.

Defensive weaknesses: The departure of four-year starter Joe Cummings, one of the school's all-time greats at end, leaves a gaping hole. His bookend, Mark Brook, also is gone after lettering four times. Junior college and freshmen help is on the way, but glossy resumes don't go very far in chasing down the WAC's quick-draw quarterbacks.

Special teams: Nothing less than special with junior Cory Wedel, a Groza Award semifinalist, who has made 53-of-54 PAT attempts and 20-of-24 field-goal tries in his career. The question is punting, where



Despite playing in the hinterlands, Marcus Harris is a legitimate All-American candidate.

Brian Gragert, No. 2 nationally last season, must be replaced.

Key to success: Wallwork's health. He had several injuries last year and the Cowboys were clearly not the same without him. Wallwork finished 15th nationally in total offense (254.4 yards per game) despite the nicks. Harris is sure to see 11 weeks of double-teaming, so Wallwork must show confidence in other targets.

Outlook: This team appears far more skilled than the school's 1993 outfit that shared the WAC title. A favorable schedule points strongly to a 6-0 start in the WAC. But then come the biggies: at San Diego State on November 7 and at Colorado State on November 16. A split could get the Cowboys into the WAC championship game.

COWBOYS DATA

Coach: Joe Tiller (29-28-1, 5 years).

1995 record: 6-5. WAC: 4-4/6th.

Key losses: Mark Brook, DE; Joe Cummings, DE; Brian Gragert, P; Jason Holanda, OLB; Ryan Oman, G.

Starters returning: **Offense (10):** Rob Bohlinger, T, 6-9/275, Jr.; Kirby Drube, TE, 6-5/235, Soph.; Marcus Harris, WR, 6-2/214, Sr.; Jay Korth, G, 6-4/280, Jr.; Richard Peace, WR, 6-1/187, Sr.; Rob Rathbun, C, 6-3/265, Sr.; David Saraf, WR, 5-10/176, Sr.; Steve Scifres, T, 6-5/286, Sr.; Len Sexton, RB, 5-11/171, Sr.; Josh Wallwork, QB, 6-3/207, Sr. **Defense (8):** Je'Ney Jackson, CB, 5-9/179, Jr.; Jay Jenkins, LB, 6-2/226, Sr.; Pat Larson, T, 6-5/274, Sr.; Brian Lee, FS, 6-2/180, Jr.; Brent Leu, T, 6-6/265, Sr.; Jim Talich, MLB, 6-1/230, Jr.; Greg Van Leer, SS, 5-11/189, Jr.; Lee Vaughn, CB, 5-11/174, Sr. **Kickers (1):** Cory Wedel, K, 5-9/180, Jr. **Other key returnees:** Josh Amundson, RB, Soph.; Marques Brigham, RB, Soph.; John Davis, QB, Sr.; Shane Glasser, G, Jr.; Stuart Hansen, DE, Jr.; Julian Hooker, WR, Soph. (RS); Waymon Livingston, CB, Sr.; Monti Perry, DT, Sr.; Chuck Polson, LB, Sr.; Chris Stanton, P, Soph.

Top newcomers: Tim Beasley, RB, Fr. (RS); Marcus Brunson, WR, Fr.; Jason Dreessen, DE, Fr. (RS); D.J. Eliot, LB, Fr. (RS); John Hooper, WR, Jr. (JC); Jeff Leonard, DE, Jr. (JC); Wendel Montgomery, WR, Fr. (RS); Jeremy Silcox, QB, Jr. (JC); Jay Stoner, QB, Fr.; Kalim Underwood, LB, Jr. (JC).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Sexton (129 att., 810 yds., 5 TD); **Passing:** Wallwork (271 att., 163 comp., 13 INT, 21 TD, 2,363 yds.); **Receiving:** Harris (78 rec., 1,423 yds., 14 TD); **Tackles:** Talich (103); **Sacks:** Leu (5).

Site: Laramie, Wyo. **Stadium:** War Memorial (33,500).

Last league title won: 1993 (tie)

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—Idaho	Oct. 12—Western Michigan
Sept. 7—at Iowa State	Oct. 19—Fresno State
Sept. 14—Hawaii	Nov. 2—Southern Methodist
Sept. 21—Air Force	Nov. 7—at San Diego State
Sept. 28—at UNLV	Nov. 16—at Colorado State
Oct. 5—at San Jose State	

3. FRESNO STATE

Offensive strengths: The Bulldogs are well-armed for the pass-happy WAC. Coach Jim Sweeney says Jim Arellanes, who finished seventh nationally in passing efficiency last season, has NFL skills. Then there's Richie Donati, who has 16 career starts and 4,144 passing yards. Arellanes' suspect footwork should be masked by a veteran front. Brian Roberson is the latest in a series of outstanding receivers, and running backs Michael Pittman and JC import Michael Gray combine speed, power and size.

Offensive weaknesses: For the first time in years, the Bulldogs' receiving depth behind their go-to targets is lacking. If veteran center Gary Osmundson goes down, snap exchanges will become an adventure. Run blocking needs to be upgraded.

Defensive strengths: Senior strong safety

Omar Stoutmire led the WAC and set a school record with a staggering 198 tackles in '95. Veteran tackles Bryan Robinson and Lumumba Neal fortify the front, and A.J. Gass is a high-octane outside linebacker.

Defensive weaknesses: Stoutmire set records for two reasons: his ability and the lack of same among the front seven. He faces another busy year with the make-over of the linebacking corps and dependence on new faces up front.

Special teams: The Bulldogs will get a kick out of Johan Lyssand (field goals, PATs), but they need continued improvement from punter Jeff Roberts. Better field position will come only with better punt and kickoff coverage.

Key to success: Following the program's first consecutive losing seasons since 1980-81, some form of success must be gleaned from a wicked season-opening schedule featuring Oregon at home and Auburn and Utah on the road. A 0-3 start may have Bulldogs fans thinking basketball (spelled T-a-r-k-a-n-i-a-n) in late September.

Outlook: Sweeney, 67, is determined and resilient. He has had seven major surgeries in six years, had a near-fatal car accident in March, replaced three coaches and weeded out a few less-than-devoted players. He is four career victories shy of 200. The offense will assure that landmark for the coach, but the defense can guarantee very little—unless new coordinator Robin Ross is a miracle worker.

BULLDOGS DATA

Coach: Jim Sweeney (139-68-3, 18 years; 196-147-4 overall, 31 years).

1995 record: 5-7. WAC: 2-6/T7th.

Key losses: Reggie Brown, FB; Steve Casner, DE; Woody Green, CB (quit team); Dan Han, OT; Charlie Jones, WR; Gene Smith, LB.

Starters returning: **Offense (7):** Michael Carr, G, 6-3/275, Jr.; Richie Donati, QB, 6-3/200, Sr.; Warren Fortier, TE, 6-2/240, Jr.; Gary Osmundson, C, 6-3/285, Sr.; Michael Pittman, TB, 6-0/205, Jr.; Brian Roberson, WR, 5-10/170, Sr.; Allen Weathers, T, 6-4/310, Sr. **Defense (7):** Marilyn Jackson, CB (moved from SS), 5-10/165, Jr.; Chris Love, OLB, 6-1/210, Jr.; Lumumba Neal, NT, 6-3/275, Sr.; Bryan Robinson, T, 6-5/275, Sr.; Shatony Sargeant, E, 6-5/280, Sr.; Omar Stoutmire, SS (moved from FS), 5-11/195, Sr.; Steve Wilson, CB, 5-10/175, Sr. **Kickers (2):** Johan Lyssand, K, 5-7/150, Soph.; Jeff Roberts, P, 6-4/215, Soph.

Other key returnees: Kevin Adams, OLB, Soph.; Jim Arellanes, QB, Sr.; Leroy Colbert, DE, Sr.; Chris Conrad, G, Jr.; A.J. Gass, LB, Jr.; Cory Hall, CB, Soph.; Ryan Holmes, MLB, Jr.; Chris Lee, G, Jr.; Scott Mueller, G, Sr.; Danny Williams, DE, Sr.

Top newcomers: Randi Bishop, WR, Jr. (JC); Michael Gray, TB, Jr. (JC); Tyrell Grayson, LB, Fr.; Robert Jenkins, FB, Jr. (RS); Greg Minnate, WR, Jr. (RS/JC); Akka-Ar Moses, FB, Fr.; Ryan Negrete, DE, Jr. (JC); Allan Nicholas, MLB, Jr. (JC);



Omar Stoutmire made 198 tackles last season, proof that Fresno's front seven was woeful. For the Bulldogs to improve, his tackle total must drop.

Malama Scanlan, DE, Sr. (transfer/Iowa Wesleyan).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Pittman (127 att., 561 yds., 7 TD); **Passing:** Donati (254 att., 141 comp., 11 INT, 12 TD, 1,890 yds.); **Receiving:** Roberson (55 rec., 758 yds., 5 TD); **Tackles:** Stoutmire (198); **Sacks:** Robinson (4). **Site:** Fresno, Calif. **Stadium:** Bulldog (41,031).

Last league title won: 1993 (tie).

SCHEDULE

Aug. 3—Oregon	Oct. 26—at UNLV
Sept. 7—at Auburn	Nov. 2—Boise State
Sept. 21—at Utah	Nov. 9—Colorado State
Sept. 28—Hawaii	Nov. 16—Air Force
Oct. 12—San Jose State	Nov. 23—at San Diego State
Oct. 19—at Wyoming	

4. AIR FORCE

Offensive strengths: At a school renowned for the option, this is an easy choice—quarterback Beau Morgan. One of only eight players in NCAA history to exceed 1,000 yards passing and rushing in one season, he returns as the WAC's most prolific player. As a junior, he accounted for 31 touchdowns—six more than anyone else in the league.

Offensive weaknesses: Morgan, fullback Nakia Addison and guard Carlton Hendrix are the Falcons' only returning starters. There's no question Morgan rivals 1989 Heisman Trophy finalist Dee Dowis as the finest quarterback in Air Force history, but Houdini would have trouble performing magic in the wishbone offense without proper blocking up front. And the Falcons face a severe challenge replacing four starters in the line. Further, three-year starting halfback Jake Campbell is gone, as are wide receiver Richie Marsh and tight end Steve Hendricks.

Defensive strengths: If quality up the middle counts in football, the Falcons are in good shape with linemen Cameron Curry, Jamie Maunz and Chris Schweighardt and

linebackers Lee Guthrie and Steve Fernandez.

Defensive weaknesses: Pass coverage, which, in the WAC, is like exposing your chin to Mike Tyson. Free safety LeRon Hudgins and cornerback Kelvin King have been secondary pillars, but they have departed. Replacing pass-rush specialist Brian McCray at outside linebacker won't be easy, either.

Special teams: There will be more rebuilding in this department, with the loss of Steve Carr, the nation's 10th-ranked punter, and kicker Randy Roberts.

Key to success: Quick progress from the lettermen who figure to replace the four departed offensive linemen. If they're merely good, Morgan will make them look great. He's that special.

Outlook: Beau knows success under pressure, but most of his starting teammates don't. That will become evident in a daunting Pacific Division road agenda that will send the Falcons to Wyoming, San Diego State and Fresno State.

FALCONS DATA

Coach: Fisher DeBerry (92-55-1, 13 years).

1995 record: 8-5 (lost to Texas Tech in Copper Bowl). WAC: 6-2/T1st.

Key losses: Jake Campbell, RB; Steve Carr, P; Bret Cillessen, G; Mark DeRock, OLB; Adam Edwards, C; Gerhard Hahn, OT; Steve Hendricks, TE; LeRon Hudgins, FS; Danta Johnson, RB; Kelvin King, CB; Richie Marsh, WR; Brian McCray, OLB; Dan Palmer, OT; Sam Ransom, SS; Randy Roberts, K.

Starters returning: **Offense (3):** Nakia Addison, FB, 5-8/182, Sr.; Carlton Hendrix, G, 6-3/260, Sr.; Beau Morgan, QB, 5-11/187, Sr. **Defense (6):** Cameron Curry, T, 6-5/260, Sr.; Mickey Dalton, CB, 5-7/182, Sr.; Steve Fernandez, ILB, 6-1/230, Jr.; Lee Guthrie, ILB, 6-1/223, Sr.; Jamie Maunz, T, 6-4/264, Sr.; Chris Schweighardt, NT, 5-11/225, Sr. **Kickers:** None.

Other key returnees: Marcus Alexander, WR, Sr.; Tom Brown, QB, Sr.; Todd Eilers, RB, Sr.; Sean Finnian, ILB, Jr.; Brian Mulloy, SS, Sr.; Stephen Pipes, FS, Jr.; Alex Pupich, LB (moved from DT), Sr.; Marc Ranger, WR, Sr.; Tobin Ruff, RB, Jr.; Frank Staine-Payne, CB, Jr.; Joe Suhajda, LB (moved from NT), Sr.; Craig Tanner, FB, Sr.; Dustin Tyner, WR, Sr.

Top newcomers: Tim Curry, CB, Soph.; Dylan Newman, CB, Soph.; Jemal Singleton, HB, Soph.; Dallas Thompson, K, Soph.

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Morgan (229 att., 1,285 yds., 19 TD); **Passing:** Morgan (169 att., 90 comp., 7 INT, 12 TD, 1,165 yds.); **Receiving:** Addison (5 rec., 28 yds., 1 TD); **Tackles:** Guthrie (100); **Sacks:** Curry (6).

Site: Colorado Springs. **Stadium:** Falcon (50,126).

Last league title won: 1995 (tie).

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—San Jose State	Oct. 19—at Notre Dame
Sept. 7—at UNLV	Oct. 26—Hawaii
Sept. 21—at Wyoming	Nov. 2—Colorado State
Sept. 28—Rice	Nov. 9—at Army
Oct. 5—at San Diego State	Nov. 16—at Fresno State
Oct. 12—Navy	

5. COLORADO STATE

Offensive strengths: Quarterback Moses Moreno, running backs Damon Washington and Jaime Blake, deep-threat receiver Paul Turner (if he's academically eligible), tight ends Justin Shull and Eli Workman and the left side of the line in tackle Mark Rogowski and guard Steve Dundee. That's a respectable arsenal, one that has even more firepower with the addition of receiver Geoff Turner, a transfer from Iowa State.

Offensive weaknesses: Neither Moreno nor '95 part-starter Daren Wilkinson has sustained enough consistency to take command of the offense (although Moreno is a

firm No. 1). And the Rams will be as green as their school color from center to right tackle.

Defensive strengths: Outside linebackers Nate Kvamme and Willie Taylor launched what promise to be sterling four-year careers with effective freshman seasons. A steady performance by tackle DeVaughn Hawkins was hardly noticed with the spotlight focused on then-senior ends Brady Smith and Sean Moran. Veteran tackle Kirk Bowman appears to be in top form after missing the last nine games with a knee injury.

Defensive weaknesses: A lot of credit has been attributed to coach Sonny Lubick, former Miami defensive coordinator. He deserves it. Equally deserving were linemen Smith and Moran and defensive backs Ray Jackson and All-American Greg Myers. And although Lubick is back, they're not. And that leaves crater-like holes. In addition, strong safety Steve Standifer, the secondary's only returning starter, has been dismissed from the squad for violating team policy. Whether he returns is uncertain.

Special teams: In a year in which the Rams are likely to allow more points, kicker/punter Matt McDougal needs to step up. Last year, he punted respectably (38.6-yard average) but was only 8-of-17 on field-goal attempts.

Key to success: Moreno's shortcomings were somewhat disguised last year because of the Rams' outstanding defense. This year, Moreno will need to step forward and earn the trust of his teammates as Wilkinson has taken a plunge on the depth chart.

Outlook: Lubick has established himself as the most successful coach in school history. The fact is, he inherited some marquee talent from Earle Bruce that carried the program through last year. Now's the true test for Lubick. It will be a difficult one to pass.

RAMS DATA

Coach: Sonny Lubick (23-12, 3 years; 44-31 overall, 7 years).

1995 record: 8-4 (lost to Kansas State in Holiday Bowl).
WAC: 6-2/1st.

Key losses: Karl Ballard, MLB; Mack Craft, CB; James Cregg, OT; Brandon Evans, C; Ray Jackson, CB; Greg Myers, FS; Sean Moran, DE; Todd Peterson, G; Brady Smith, DE; Steve Standifer, S (dismissed from team); E.J. Watson, RB.

Starters returning: Offense (7): Darrell Ballard, RB, 6-1/198, Jr.; Steve Dundee, G, 6-4/285, Jr.; Moses Moreno, QB, 6-2/190, Jr.; Mark Rogowski, T, 6-5/286, Sr.; Justin Shull, TE, 6-3/262, Sr.; Paul Turner, WR, 5-9/188, Sr.; Eli Workman, TE, 6-4/250, Jr.
Defense (3): DeVaughn Hawkins, T, 6-1/284, Jr.; Nate Kvamme, OLB, 6-1/210, Soph.; Willie Taylor, OLB, 6-0/212, Soph. **Kickers (1):** Matt McDougal, P/K, 5-10/170, Sr.

Other key returnees: Ronald Antoine, WR, Sr.; Jaime Blake, FB, Soph.; Kirk Bowman, T, Sr.; Jeremy Calhoun, WR, Sr.; Chris Myers, CB, Sr.; Mitch Palmer, DE, Sr.; Joey Porter, RB, Soph.; Adrian Ross, DE, Jr.; George Schramm, DE, Jr.; Steve Trammell, DE, Soph.; Damon Washington, FB, Soph.; Daren Wilkinson, QB, Sr.

Top newcomers: Calvin Branch, FB, Sr. (transfer/Iowa State); Frank Kulis, DL/TE, Fr.; Will Layne, WR, Fr.; Matt Newton, QB, Fr.; Eason Ramson, CB, Jr. (JC); Abayneh Turner, LB, Fr.; Geoff Turner, WR, Jr. (transfer/Iowa State); Justin Werth, C, Sr. (transfer/Pacific).

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Washington (104 att., 600 yds., 2 TD); Passing: Moreno (175 att., 99 comp., 6 INT, 11 TD, 1,439 yds.); Receiving: Turner (41 rec., 678 yds., 9 TD); Tackles: Taylor (67); Sacks: Ross (3).

Site: Fort Collins, Colo. **Stadium:** Hughes (30,000).

Last league title won: 1995 (tie).

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—UT-Chattanooga	Oct. 12—at Tulsa
Sept. 7—Colorado	Oct. 19—San Jose State
Sept. 14—at Oregon	Oct. 26—San Diego State
Sept. 21—UNLV	Nov. 2—at Air Force
Sept. 28—at Nebraska	Nov. 9—at Fresno State
Oct. 5—at Hawaii	Nov. 16—Wyoming

6. HAWAII

Offensive strengths: That's like counting snowstorms at Honolulu—there are none. There's potential at wide receiver, where Gerald Lacey, Jason Mane and Dillan Micus return. Shane Oliveira and Joe Wong offer a decent base up front.

Offensive weaknesses: That's like counting palm trees at Honolulu—there are many. New coach Fred vonAppen doesn't have a returning quarterback fit for his West Coast offense (which replaces fired coach Bob Wagner's spread option). Chances are good that a freshman will call signals. Who knows who will run the football. (Brendyn Agbayani did have a good spring toting the ball after running for a mere 40 yards in '95.)

Defensive strengths: New coordinator Don Lindsey should find some talent among 22 linebackers, the best of whom is veteran Peter Salavea. Ben Bright will shine in the restructured four-man front, and cornerback Doe Henderson is sure to be a big contributor after missing last season because of an injured back.

Defensive weaknesses: There's nothing to suggest the Rainbow Warriors won't get pummeled on the ground again this season after finishing 95th against the rush in '95. A shortage of competent linemen is forcing the conversion of some offensive players to the defensive side.

Special teams: The loss of standout kick returner Matt Harding will be felt, but kicker Carlton Oswalt and punter Chad ShROUT return with respectable credentials.

Key to success: Still dependent on Wagner's battered leftovers, vonAppen can only hope to get everyone on the same page and show some semblance of compet-

itiveness early. A strong showing at home in the season opener against Boston College could do wonders. But that's asking for a lot.

Outlook: vonAppen arrives from Colorado with the regimen of a Marine and the intellect of an Ivy Leaguer. The man who likes classical music is an interesting subject, but not one to be confused with Moses. He won't lead the Rainbow Warriors to anything close to the promised land—at least not in 1996.

RAINBOWS DATA

Coach: Fred vonAppen (first year).

1995 record: 4-8. WAC: 2-6/7th.

Key losses: Tupu Alualu, RB; Jeff Bredy, OLB; Agenhart Ellis, LB; Matt Harding, KR; Danny Katoa, LB; Clint Kuboyama, FS; Marcus Malepeai, G; George Noga, OLB; Marvis Tauala, DT; Rod York, DT.

Starters returning: Offense (6): Ellie Kapihi, T (will move to DL), 6-3/269, Jr.; Gerald Lacey, WR, 6-0/182 Sr.; Johnny Macon, QB, 5-11/195, Jr.; Dillan Micus, WR, 5-11/175, Soph.; Shane Oliveira, C, 6-2/272, Soph.; Joe Wong, T, 6-6/295, Soph. **Defense (3):** Punahou Aina, LB, 5-10/215, Jr.; Brian Chapman, NT, 6-2/266, Jr.; Al Hunter, CB, 5-9/179, Jr.; **Kickers (2):** Carlton Oswalt, K, 5-10/184, Sr.; Chad ShROUT, P, 6-2/230, Soph.

Other key returnees: Brendyn Agbayani, FB (moved from WR), Soph.; Ben Bright, NT, Soph.; Kamuela Cobb-Adams, LB, Soph.; Glenn Freitas, QB, Sr.; Doe Henderson, CB, Sr. (RS/back); Eddie Klaneski, CB (moved from WR, where he started last season), Jr.; Jason Mane, WR, Jr.; Conrad Paulo, G, Jr.; Mike Petersen, G/T, Sr.; Greg Roach, LB, Sr.; Robbie Robinson, CB, Soph.; Peter Salavea, ILB, Soph.; Bobby Singh, G, Soph.; Tony Thomas, RB, Jr.; Niko Vitale, FS, Sr. (RS/knee). **Top newcomers:** Rufus Ayeni, LB, Jr. (JC); Jerimi Bourland, QB, Fr.; Stephen Gonzales, LB, Jr. (JC); John Gurasich, QB, Fr.; Adrian Klemm, OT, Fr. (RS); Kaulana Noa, OT, Fr. (RS); Andrew Phillips, G, Fr. (RS); Bo Parks, WR, Jr. (JC); Bob Pigot, DL, Jr. (JC); Josh Skinner, QB, Fr.; Hunter Young, QB, Fr. (RS).

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Macon (107 att., 378 yds., 6 TD); Passing: Macon (152 att., 68 comp., 2 INT, 6 TD, 985 yds.); Receiving: Klaneski (36 rec., 513 yds., 1 TD); Tackles: Aina (87); Sacks: Aina (2).

Site: Honolulu. **Stadium:** Aloha (50,000).

Last league title won: 1992.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—Boston College	Oct. 12—at San Diego State
Sept. 7—Ohio	Oct. 19—UNLV
Sept. 14—at Wyoming	Oct. 26—at Air Force
Sept. 21—Boise State	Nov. 9—San Jose State
Sept. 28—at Fresno State	Nov. 16—Brigham Young
Oct. 5—Colorado State	Nov. 30—Wisconsin



If Air Force rebuilds its line, expect quarterback Beau Morgan to have another productive season.

7. SAN JOSE STATE

Offensive strengths: There are few, most notably wide receivers Windrell Hayes and David Doyle. If they get open, chances are good that senior quarterback Carl Dean will take advantage. He completed 60.3 percent of his passes last year. Halfback Patrick Walsh returns, although he missed spring practice while playing baseball.

Offensive weaknesses: Dean has good size, but it won't do much good if he spends too much time on his back. That's a good possibility with the Spartans stepping into the WAC with a reconstructed line. And that includes tight end, their weakest position of all.

Defensive strengths: Clearly at linebacker, where Eric Quarles, on the outside, and Jacob Malae, inside, retain starting jobs. Tony Gratton, who last played for the Spartans three seasons ago, has overcome back problems and is a likely starter at nose tackle. In addition, there's a surplus of depth for the first time in years because several players are coming off redshirt seasons.

Defensive weaknesses: A vulnerable line and secondary present frightening possibilities in a league that scores like Michael Jordan—at will. Pacific transfers Sean Duncan and Shon Kendall arrive at an opportune time up front. Better recruiting is the only answer in the secondary.

Special teams: A bright spot, thanks to senior Joe Furlow, a Groza Award semifinalist who made 10-of-13 field-goal attempts in '95. He also won the punting job by default after Jason Chapple flubbed as a freshman. Chapple will try again.

Key to success: The Spartans' only chance is if Dean can volley with the WAC's big-hitting quarterbacks. San Jose State did put up 33 points against Stanford last year, so who knows.

Outlook: There's no reason to expect a turnaround this year from this former Big West team, which has gone 8-25 in John Ralston's three years seasons at the helm. The former Utah State, Stanford and NFL coach (Denver) anticipates improved recruiting because of the school's affiliation with the WAC. How long that will take to pay dividends is anybody's guess.

SPARTANS DATA

Coach: John Ralston (8-25, 3 years; 94-72-4 overall, 16 years).
1995 record: 3-8. Big West: 2-4/7th.

Key losses: Howard Butler, NG; David Elzey, LB; John Grootegoed, G; Johnny Harper, CB; Chris Hill, G; Donald Lindsey, FB; Beto Lomax, S; Brian Lundy, WR; Greg Phillips, OLB; Brian Roche, TE; Mike Snell, OT; Tom Sotelo, DT; Salotti Tautuaa, OT.

Starters returning: **Offense (5):** Harry Daniels, C, 6-1/230, Soph.; Carl Dean, QB, 6-1/202, Sr.; Windrell Hayes, WR, 5-11/198, Soph.; Curtice Macfarlane, G, 6-4/274, Jr.; Patrick Walsh, RB, 5-6/185, Sr. **Defense (5):** Floyd Johnson, S, 5-11/192, Soph.; Jacob Malae, LB, 5-10/208, Sr.; Jerald Perry, T, 6-2/274, Jr.; Eric Polk, CB, 5-10/172, Jr.; Eric Quarles, OLB, 6-1/225, Sr. **Kickers (2):** Jason Chapple, P, 6-1/180, Soph.; Joe Furlow, K, 5-11/179, Sr.

Other key returnees: Eric Coughran, OLB, Jr. (RS); David Doyle, WR, Sr. (RS/injury); Tony Gratton, NT, Sr.; James Hodgins, FB, Soph.; Carlos Meeks, RB, Soph.; Jarrett Robinson, S, Sr.; Omar Smith, CB, Soph.; Kurt Strauss, OT, Soph.; Trevis Wooden, LB, Jr. (RS).

Top newcomers: Damon Bowers, WR, Sr. (transfer/Pacific); Kenny Calvin, DB, Jr. (JC); Sean Duncan, DT, Sr.



SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY

The Spartans' offense will be bolstered by the return of David Doyle, who was injured last year.

(transfer/Pacific); La Tef Grim, WR, Fr.; Michael Hamilton, TE, Sr. (transfer/Utah State); Shon Kendall, DT, Jr. (transfer/Pacific); David Loverne, G, Soph. (transfer/Idaho); Mark Roe, OT, Sr. (transfer/San Diego State); Matt Roe, OT, Sr. (transfer/San Diego State); Malakai Uhi, DB, Fr.; Ghalee Wadood, DB, Jr. (JC).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Walsh (104 att., 467 yds., 2 TD); **Passing:** Dean (302 att., 182 comp., 10 INT, 14 TD, 2,214 yds.); **Receiving:** Hayes (39 rec., 535 yds., 5 TD); **Tackles:** Malae (100); **Sacks:** Quarles (2).

Site: San Jose, Calif. **Stadium:** Spartan (31,218).
Last league title won: None (first year in WAC).

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—at Air Force	Oct. 12—at Fresno State
Sept. 7—California	Oct. 19—at Colorado State
Sept. 14—at Stanford	Nov. 2—San Diego State
Sept. 21—Texas-El Paso	Nov. 9—at Hawaii
Sept. 28—at Wash. State	Nov. 16—at Washington
Oct. 5—Wyoming	Nov. 23—UNLV

8. UNLV

Offensive strengths: Left tackle Dennis Whitmore (6-5, 295) has strength to match his size. The NFL will beckon in 1997. Wide receivers Carlos Baker and Damon Williams were force-fed as freshmen in '95; they should approach WAC standards at the position in the next couple of years. A receiving bonus appears to have arrived in the form of Warren Rosegreen, a 6-5, 210-pound addition from the basketball team. Senior Tony Burton is the team's best threat, swinging between running back and receiver. Rusher Omar Love was effective in the spring after sitting out last season.

Offensive weaknesses: It's a shaky situation at quarterback, which doesn't bode well in a league that places a premium on scoring. Sophomore Kevin Crook and redshirt freshman Jon Denton are battling for the job. The right side of the line, including tight end, is a collective sore spot.

Defensive strengths: Sophomore strong safety Quincy Sanders is the base of an experienced secondary. Coach Jeff Horton believes redshirt freshman linebacker Roderick Jones will, in time, develop into one of the school's all-time

greats at the position.

Defensive weaknesses: A glaring lack of depth in the line and holes at linebacker. Even the secondary, for all its experience, has several players partly responsible for the Rebels' nation-worst scoring defense last season (47.3 points per game).

Special teams: Punter Joe Kristosik is coming off an acceptable freshman season, but there's not a defined kicking talent in the house. That helps explain why only 10 field goals were attempted in '95, and why just five were made. Baker and Burton had spectacular moments returning kickoffs.

Key to success: Ball control, of which the Rebels had none last season (they finished last nationally in turnover ratio at minus-22). They threw 21 interceptions and lost 18 fumbles.

Outlook: Horton said the move into the WAC "saved football at UNLV." It may not appear that way come November—one year after the Rebels went from first to last in the Big West and allowed more than 50 points seven times. UNLV will be associated with the WAC championship game only in that the school will be hosting it. The Rebels are years away from participating.

REBELS DATA

Coach: Jeff Horton (9-14, 2 years; 16-18, 3 years overall).

1995 record: 2-9. Big West: 1-5/10th.

Key losses: Kevin Bass, LB; Jared Brown, QB; Paul Carrillo, NT; Jose Gonzalez, C; Rossie Johnson, LB; Robbie Morrison, G; Marvin Robinson, LB; Jabbar Thomas, FS; P.J. Tyler, LB; David White, TE.

Starters returning: **Offense (7):** Carlos Baker, WR, 5-10/195, Soph.; Tony Burton, RB/WR, 5-10/190, Sr.; Jerald Pierucci, G, 6-4/285, Soph.; Mike Reilly, G, 6-3/295, Soph.; Jason Toohey, WR, 5-10/180, Jr.; Dennis Whitmore, T, 6-5/295, Sr.; Damon Williams, WR, 6-4/225, Soph. **Defense (5):** Charles Fisher, E, 6-2/255, Jr.; Bret Gilbert, LB, 6-2/235, Soph.; Carlos Hilliard, CB, 5-8/190, Sr.; Quincy Sanders, SS, 6-3/195, Soph.; Jermaine Webster, CB, 5-10/185, Sr. **Kickers (2):** Alan DiLeo, K, 5-8/155, Jr.; Joe Kristosik, P, 6-3/225, Soph.

Other key returnees: Dominic Andrews, DT, Jr.; DeJohn Branch, RB, Sr.; Bobby Coffman, CB, Soph.; Kevin Crook, QB, Soph.; Ted Damell, DE, Soph.; Lamont Hicks, LB, Jr.; Damien Howard, NT, Soph.; Ken Kinnard, LB, Soph.; Omar Love, RB, Sr. (RS/academics); Daniel Martin, LB, Jr.; Derrick Monroe, NT, Soph.; Talance Sawyer, TE, Soph.; Dan Stewart, SS, Sr.; Jon Zaczek, C, Jr.

Top newcomers: Randy Black, DB, Fr.; Jon Denton, QB, Fr. (RS); Ben Glidewell, OL, Jr. (JC); Bubba Gonzalez, C, Jr. (JC); James Humes, DB, Soph. (transfer/BYU); Roderick Jones, LB, Fr. (RS); Kory Koske, OL, Jr. (RS/JC); Josh O'Brien, OT, Fr. (RS); Scott Patton, LB, Jr. (JC); Warren Rosegreen, WR, Jr.; Mac Smith, DE, Jr. (JC); Len Ware, WR, Fr. (RS).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Burton (163 att., 880 yds., 5 TD); **Passing:** Crook (39 att., 21 comp., 1 INT, 1 TD, 216 yds.); **Receiving:** Williams (41 rec., 515 yds., 2 TD); **Tackles:** Sanders (39); **Sacks:** Howard and Hicks (1).

Site: Las Vegas. **Stadium:** Sam Boyd (32,000).
Last league title won: None (first year in WAC).

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—at Tennessee	Oct. 12—at BYU
Sept. 7—Air Force	Oct. 19—at Hawaii
Sept. 14—Wisconsin	Oct. 26—Fresno State
Sept. 21—at Colorado State	Nov. 2—at TCU
Sept. 28—Wyoming	Nov. 16—San Diego State
Oct. 5—Nevada	Nov. 23—at San Jose State

Andy Boogaard, who reported on the Pacific Division, covers the WAC for the Fresno (Calif.) Bee, and Jonathan Feigen, who reported on the Mountain Division, covers college football for the Houston Chronicle.

Ascending: Utah. The Utes return 15 starters, including the impact players on offense, defense and special teams, from a 7-4 team that earned a share of the school's first WAC title in 31 years. Last season's unexpected performance, which followed three consecutive bowl appearances, proved without a doubt that this program is in a forward lean. Above all, Utah has beaten intrastate rival and perennial WAC power BYU three consecutive times.

Descending: San Jose State. John Ralston once took Stanford to two Rose Bowl victories and got Denver to the brink of the NFL playoffs in the Broncos' leaner days. But he obviously has been no miracle worker at San Jose State, going 8-25 in three years and spinning the Spartans into a downward spiral entering the WAC.

Nightmare schedule: San Jose State's. Seven of the Spartans' 12 games are on the road, the first a likely bashing by Air Force and Beau Morgan at Colorado Springs. The WAC road agenda also includes daunting dates at Fresno State and Colorado State. And the Spartans' non-conference calendar has potential crushers at Stanford, Washington State and Washington.

Dream schedule: San Diego State's. It's ideal, particularly in the WAC, with one exception—a road test against two-time reigning league champion Colorado State. But the Rams have some major rebuilding to do on defense. Other than that, the Aztecs play the weakest of the WAC Pacific Division on the road (San Jose State, UNLV) and the best at home (Air Force, Wyoming, Fresno State). Out of conference, they'll have a good shot at defeating Oklahoma in September at The Murph.

Best matchup of the year: BYU at Utah, November 23. An all-star cast in a intrastate showdown that should decide the WAC's Mountain Division title. This will match two of the WAC's premier quarterbacks (BYU's Steve Sarkisian, Utah's Mike Fouts) and two of the league's top defensive players (BYU linebacker Shay Muirbrook, Utah safety Harold Lusk). Plus, there will be enough friction to rock the Mormon Tabernacle in Salt Lake City.

Worst matchup of the year: UNLV at Tennessee, August 31. Peyton Manning against a defense that allowed 47.3 points per game in 1995. A severe test for Southern hospitality. Opening line: Vols by, oh, about 56.

Bowl bound: Utah will defeat San Diego State in the WAC's first championship playoff at Las Vegas. Then, they'll go their separate ways—Utah to the Holiday Bowl in San Diego and San Diego State, unfortunately for the oft-disappointed Holiday officials, to the Copper Bowl in Tucson. Shockingly, BYU will spend the holidays at home for the second year in a row after making 17 consecutive bowl appearances.

Biggest shoes to fill: Those of quarterback Max Knake and running back Andre Davis at TCU. JC import Fred Taylor may supplant Knake, who broke Sammy

HONOR ROLL

Best offensive backfield:	San Diego State.
Best wide receivers:	San Diego State.
Best offensive line:	Wyoming.
Best defensive line:	Utah.
Best linebackers:	Southern Methodist.
Best secondary:	San Diego State.
Best special teams:	Brigham Young.
Hardest hitter:	Chris Bordano, LB, Southern Methodist.
Best backup quarterback:	Richie Donati, Fresno State.
Best pro prospect:	George Jones, RB, San Diego State.
Best game-day atmosphere:	Fresno State.

RANKING THE RECRUITING

Top recruit in parentheses

1. Brigham Young (QB Bret Engemann). This class has talent and speed at every position. Prep RBs Ronney Jenkins and Will Snowden should upgrade this department at the Y for years.
2. Texas Christian (RB Reggie Hunt).
3. Fresno State (RB Michael Gray).
4. San Diego State (RB Marty Graham).
5. Wyoming (QB Jay Stoner).
6. Utah (QB Darrell Arceneaux).
7. Colorado State (LB Jasper Armstrong).
8. Southern Methodist (QB Chris Sanders).
9. New Mexico (RB Dion Marion).
10. UNLV (DB Randy Black).
11. Tulsa (TB Kevin Isham).
12. Rice (QB Clint Lescher).
13. San Jose State (WR La Tef Grim).
14. Texas-El Paso (RB Elzie Johnson).
15. Hawaii (QB Josh Skinner).

(Air Force doesn't announce its incoming players.)



Donald Sellers, who accounted for 19 TDs last season, is New Mexico's marquee player.

Baugh's school records. The versatility of Davis may never be replaced, but Texas prep phenom Reggie Hunt should eventually give it a pretty good shot.

Most overrated player: BYU LB Shay Muirbrook. With the Cougars' defense designed around him, he'll get the lion's share of tackles and an equal amount of attention. But Utah has demonstrated that it can remove Muirbrook from the picture and thereby make the Cougars vulnerable.

Most underrated player: TCU C Ryan Tucker. In the Lone Star State, here beams

a shining light that has hardly been noticed beyond the border. Now playing in a conference that stretches over five time zones, maybe that will change.

Best coach: Utah's Ron McBride. Recruiting, game-day preparation and public relations—he's pushing all the right buttons. Not to be forgotten, of course, is that hat trick scored against WAC bully BYU from 1993-95. This year, he'll hit a slam.

Best staff: Utah. McBride has formed an effective mix of the old (Sean McNabb, 19 years; Fred Graves, 14 years) and the new (Tommy Lee and Steve Kaufusi, one year; Don Eck and Kyle Whittingham, two years), along with a few other dependables to steer this program toward consistent Top 25 status.

Coach on the hot seat: Wyoming's Joe Tiller. As revered as he is among peers in the WAC and throughout the land, there are rumors whistling in Laramie that Tiller better make a statement—now. He's 29-28-1 overall in five seasons. Considering all the proven ability returning to Wyoming this season, another three months of mediocrity might not be accepted.

Best bets: Air Force quarterback Beau Morgan will win his final home game, against Colorado State on November 2, officially denying the Rams any chance for a share of a third consecutive WAC title. ... Fresno State coach Jim Sweeney won't need any luck at Las Vegas on October 26 while routing the Rebels for career victory No. 200. ... Wyoming's Marcus Harris will have 1,000 receiving yards. Maybe 1,500. ... San Diego State's George Jones will have 1,000 rushing yards. Maybe 2,000. ... BYU's Steve Sarkisian will have 3,000 passing yards. Maybe 4,000. ... Hawaii first-year coach Fred vonAppen will end the season starting a true freshman at quarterback. ... Rice will be a top-20 rushing team, a bottom-20 passing team.

Odds and ends: While 16 teams may form a super conference, it also presents super problems in naming an all-league team. Consequently, look for the WAC to select all-division teams, which is tantamount to all-conference teams with eight schools in each, in addition to naming an overall All-WAC team. ... It was a bitter pill to swallow last season when the former 10-team league advanced only two teams to bowls (Colorado State in the Holiday, Air Force in the Copper). Worse, the league faces the same fate this year with 16 teams. ... BYU coach LaVell Edwards returns for his 25th year with his first multi-year contract. It's an obvious recruiting ploy for Edwards, 65. ... Should BYU play in the WAC championship game and advance to a bowl, it will play an unprecedented 15-game schedule. ... It's certain that the Cougars will be the first college team to play two games in August. They will play Texas A&M in the Pigskin Classic at Provo on August 24 and remain home to meet Arkansas State on August 31.

—ANDY BOOGAARD

1. CINCINNATI

Offensive strengths: The Bearcats are deep and experienced at receiver and running back. Receiver Robert "Big Man" Tate (895 yards, five touchdowns in 1995) will keep defensive coordinators up nights. Slippery and talented quarterback Chad Plummer rode to Cincinnati's rescue last season behind a line that allowed only 12 sacks.

Offensive weaknesses: Plummer has to duplicate his late-season surge over 11 games. Consistent run blocking is a must if Orlando Smith (471 yards rushing) is to be the force he was over the last five games of '95. Tight end is up for grabs, though redshirt Josh Anderson made strides in the spring.

Defensive strengths: There are hammers everywhere, with seven starters back. Linebackers Brad Jackson and Phillip Curry and secondary standouts Sam Barnes and Chris Hewitt are fierce tacklers. Tackle Darius Felder is poised for a big season.

Defensive weaknesses: Coordinator Tim Rose, who orchestrated Cincinnati's defensive rejuvenation, and two other assistants are gone. Expect some tinkering with the Bearcats' 4-3 as the program welcomes Rex Ryan, son of Buddy Ryan, architect of the "46" defense.

Special teams: The best in the league. Kicker Eric Richards, a Groza Award semifinalist, hit 16 field goals, one shy of the school record. Punter Steve Smith was second-team All-Independent. Oh, yes, there's a guy named Tate who led the nation in kickoff returns (34.3-yard average).

Key to success: The maturation of Plummer, who must avoid the turnovers that killed the Bearcats in several losses last year.

Outlook: Coach Rick Minter has six new assistants, but Cincinnati returns as much talent as any team in the league. The schedule is a mixed bag. Look for a quick start with five of the first seven games at home, but the Bearcats' three toughest league games are on the road.

BEARCATS DATA

Coach: Rick Minter (8-13-1, 2 years).

1995 record: 6-5 as an independent.

Key losses: Dorian Adams, NT; Muhammed El-Mubarak, ILB; Trevor Foster, TE; Ken Fowler, OLB; Darrell Harding, CB; Craedel Kimbrough, TB; Jamie Lemire, C; Pat Oakes, OT; Eric Patterson, FB; Eric Vibberts, QB.

Starters returning: **Offense (5):** Jason Fabini, T, 6-7/300, Jr.; Anthony Ladd, WR, 6-0/190, Sr.; Brian Posey, C/G, 6-4/288, Sr.; Rob Robinson, G, 6-3/288, Sr.; Robert Tate, WR/KR, 5-10/190, Sr. **Defense (7):** Phillip Curry, ILB, 6-0/235, Jr.; Darius Felder, T, 6-5/269, Sr.; Sam Barnes, SS, 6-4/215, Sr.; Chris Hewitt, CB/SS, 6-0/203, Sr.; Brad Jackson, OLB, 6-2/205, Jr.; Derrick Ransom, T, 6-4/281, Jr.; Jermaine Trent, CB, 5-11/193, Sr. **Kickers (2):** Eric Richards, K, 5-8/160, Jr.; Steve Smith, P, 5-9/164, Sr.

Other key returnees: Josh Anderson, TE, Soph. (RS); Terry Grooms, OLB, Sr.; Artrell Hawkins, SS, Jr.; Matt Knutson, OT, Soph.; Chad Plummer, QB, Soph.; Shannon Scarbrough, FB, Sr.; Don Simpson, CB, Sr.; Orlando Smith, FB, Jr.; Kevin Ward, DT, Jr.

Top newcomers: Lowery Cole, SS, Jr. (JC); Robert Cooper, TB, Fr.; Jon Elder, QB, Soph. (JC); Kenneth Kelly, LB, Fr.; Deron Savage, DT, Soph. (Prop 48); Landon Smith, FB, Jr. (JC); David Vitovitz, RB/LB, Soph. (Prop 48).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Smith (126 att., 471 yds., 4 TD); **Passing:** Plummer (47 att., 25 comp., 2 INT, 2 TD, 459 yds.); **Receiving:** Tate (46 rec., 895 yds., 5 TD); **Tackles:** Curry (124); **Sacks:** Jackson (5).

Site: Cincinnati. **Stadium:** Nippert (36,000).

Last league title won: New league.

CONFERENCE USA

Conference Rank: 8

By TIM DOHERTY

PREDICTIONS

1. CINCINNATI
2. LOUISVILLE
3. SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI
4. MEMPHIS
5. HOUSTON
6. TULANE



UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI

Expect to see Cincinnati's Robert Tate among the nation's leaders in kickoff returns again.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—Tulane
Sept. 7—Kentucky
Sept. 14—at Kansas State
Sept. 28—Miami (Ohio)
Oct. 5—at Memphis
Oct. 12—Boston College

Oct. 19—Houston
Oct. 26—at Louisville
Nov. 2—at Southern Miss
Nov. 9—at Ala.-Birmingham
Nov. 23—Northeast Louisiana

2. LOUISVILLE

Offensive strengths: Transfers Donnell Gordon (running back, Kentucky) and Steve Misetic (guard, Notre Dame) will bolster areas hit hard by graduation. Receiver Miguel Montano was only the second player in Cardinals history to snag 50 passes. The other: Mark Clayton.

Offensive weaknesses: Quarterback Marty Lowe is gone, though coach Ron Cooper likes Jason Payne and Chris Redman, a former *Parade* prep All-American. With only five games under his belt, Frank Moreau (416 yards) is Louisville's most experienced returning rusher.

Defensive strengths: Ends Kendrick

Gholston and Carl Powell make up one of the better tandems in the country. They will pose even more of a headache with Tennessee transfer Leland Taylor sliding in at tackle. Linebacker Tyrus McCloud (a team-high 126 tackles) and cornerback Sam Madison (seven interceptions) are as good as they come. The secondary is stout. **Defensive weaknesses:** Taylor notwithstanding, the Cardinals must come up with a few more run-stoppers to plug holes in the interior line. Outside linebackers Alan Campos and Johnny Frost must be replaced as well.

Special teams: Call punter Jeremy Borseth "The Undertaker." Eighteen of his punts were coffin-corner kicks downed inside the 20. Kicker David Akers can hit from 50 yards.

Key to success: The backfield. Payne or Redman has to mature quickly, and Moreau and Gordon must sustain a ground game to take the pressure off the quarterback.

Outlook: Defensive coordinator Everett Withers molded a unit that finished the year ranked 22nd nationally in total defense. It may be even better this year. The Cards will need it early, playing four of their first six games on the road (including visits to Kentucky, Penn State and Michigan State).

CARDINALS DATA

Coach: Ron Cooper (7-4, 1 year; 16-17 overall, 3 years).

1995 record: 7-4 as an independent.

Key losses: Calvin Arrington, RB; John Bell, WR; Alan Campos, OLB; Johnny Frost, OLB; Alton Jones, DT; Shawn Kries, G; Derrick Lillard, DT; Marty Lowe, QB; Roman Oben, OT; Coswell Sims, WR; Jason Stinson, C.

Starters returning: **Offense (4):** Mike Bogan, TE, 6-2/252, Jr.; Graig Hoffman, G, 6-4/273, Jr.; Matt Johnson, T, 6-4/318, Sr.; Miguel Montano, WR, 5-10/181, Jr. **Defense (7):** Tony Bethel, CB, 5-11/180, Sr.; Rico Clark, FS, 5-10/178, Sr.; John Fuqua, SS, 5-9/193, Jr.; Kendrick Gholston, E, 6-3/249, Jr.; Sam Madison, CB, 5-11/174, Sr.; Tyrus McCloud, MLB, 6-2/251, Sr.; Carl Powell, E, 6-2/257, Sr. **Kickers (2):** David Akers, K, 5-10/174, Sr.; Jeremy Borseth, P, 6-2/189, Soph.

Other key returnees: Robert Bates, WR, Jr.; Ivan Bennette, OT, Jr.; Ramon Brayan, LB, Jr.; Matt Conway, DT, Jr.; Casswell Goodman, WR, Soph.; Ikem Maduaka-Cain, G, Soph.; Rondel Marsh, DT, Jr.; Miguel Montano, WR, Jr.; Frank Moreau, RB, Soph.; Rick Nord, OT, Soph.; Jason Payne, QB, Sr.; Terry Rice-Lockett, LB, Jr.; Deran Wiley, CB, Jr.; Jason Wyatt, LB, Soph.

Top newcomers: Otis Floyd, RB, Soph. (Prop 48); Ibn Green, FB, Fr. (RS); Donnell Gordon, RB, Jr. (transfer/Kentucky); Derrick Kennedy, DE, Fr.; Steve Misetic, G, Sr. (transfer/Notre Dame); Dar-Shay Purry, CB, Soph. (Prop 48); Chris Redman, QB, Fr. (RS); Leland Taylor, DT, Sr. (transfer/Tennessee); P.J. Zariczny, TE, Jr. (JC).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Moreau (96 att., 416 yds., 2 TD); **Passing:** Payne (33 att., 15 comp., 3 INT, 0 TD, 164 yds.); **Receiving:** Montano (50 rec., 694 yds., 3 TD); **Tackles:** McCloud (126); **Sacks:** Gholston (8).

Site: Louisville, Ky. **Stadium:** Cardinal (35,500).

Last league title won: New league.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—at Kentucky
Sept. 7—at Penn State
Sept. 14—Baylor
Sept. 21—at Michigan State
Sept. 28—Southern Miss
Oct. 12—at Tulane

Oct. 19—Northern Illinois
Oct. 26—Cincinnati
Nov. 2—Memphis
Nov. 9—at North Carolina
Nov. 16—at Houston

3. SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Offensive strengths: When healthy, Eric Booth and Harold Shaw give the Golden Eagles the best running duo in the league. The line, a sore spot last year, has made major strides, led by tackle Darryl Terrell, guard Rod Ollison and tight end Terry Hardy. **Offensive weaknesses:** Quarterback is



Tough senior Tyrus McCloud is the lone returning starter among Louisville's linebackers.

up for grabs, but if incumbent Heath Graham returns to the form he showed over the last six games of 1994 and shifty senior Chris Windsor continues to develop, Southern Miss may have a two-headed monster at the position. Veteran receiver Kendrick Lee or one of two redshirt freshmen—Sherrod Gideon or Todd Pinkston—must step into the home run role of departed Fred Brock.

Defensive strengths: End Robert Brown returns from offseason shoulder surgery and Cedric Walthaw was a force after moving from middle linebacker to end during the spring. Opponents will have trouble throwing against a secondary featuring corner Rod Thomas.

Defensive weaknesses: A pair of four-year starters at outside linebacker, Albert McRae and Eugene Harmon, are gone. Injuries could be devastating to a thin defense.

Special teams: Kicker Johnny Lomoro appears to have recovered from injuries that plagued him the past two seasons. Freshman punter Jamie Purser is the heir apparent to Chris Pierce, who handled most of the punting and kicking chores the past two years.

Key to success: The line is the linchpin to offensive coordinator Norman Joseph's wide-open attack. Last year, Southern Miss sputtered because of inconsistent work up front.

Outlook: The Golden Eagles have the talent to be in the thick of the league race. As usual, the schedule is most unkind, with trips to Georgia and Alabama kicking off the season and a visit to Florida State capping it. Key conference games: at Houston and Louisville.

GOLDEN EAGLES DATA

Coach: Jeff Bower (25-30-1, 5 years).

1995 record: 6-5 as an independent.

Key losses: Tim Bell, DE; Fred Brock, WR; Chris Buckhalter, RB; L.T. Guiley, SS; Eugene Harmon, OLB; Derrick Hervey, CB; Albert McRae OLB; Chris Pierce, K/P.

Starters returning: Offense (9): Jason Barlow, G, 6-3/270,

Sr.; Heath Graham, QB, 6-3/220, Jr.; Brad Hamilton, FB, 6-0/225, Sr.; Terry Hardy, TE, 6-5/245, Jr.; Rod Ollison, G, 6-2/285, Sr.; Ryan Pearson, WR, 6-3/195, Sr.; O'Leaster Pope, T, 6-5/315, Soph.; Will Symmes, C, 6-2/280, Sr.; Darryl Terrell, T, 6-5/310, Sr. **Defense (6):** Robert Brown, E, 6-3/255, Jr.; Jason Hall, NT, 6-3/280, Sr.; Quentin Jackson, T, 6-4/260, Sr.; Marchant Kenney, ILB, 6-2/220, Jr.; Roy Stabler, FS, 6-3/210, Sr.; Rod Thomas, CB, 6-2/189, Sr. **Kickers:** None.

Other key returnees: Eric Booth, RB, Jr.; Kendall Dunn, DT, Jr.; Brandon Hambricht, OT, Jr.; Kasey Keith, G, JR.; Kendrick Lee, WR, Sr.; Johnny Lomoro, K, Sr.; Larry Norton, TE, Sr.; Lytrel Pollard, OLB, Jr.; Lee Roberts, QB, Soph.; Nicky Seymour, CB, Sr.; Harold Shaw, RB, Jr.; T.J. Slaughter, OLB, Soph.; Patrick Surtain, CB, Jr.; Cedric Walthaw, DE (moved from MLB), Sr.; Larry Watts, SS, Soph.; Chris Windsor, QB, Sr.; Melvin Winn, DT, Jr.

Top newcomers: Shedrick Blackmon, OL, Fr.; Brandon Francis, RB, Fr. (RS); Sherrod Gideon, WR, Fr. (RS); Henry McClendon, OL, Jr. (JC); Perry Phenix, DB, Sr. (JC); Quantrell Phillips, DT, Jr. (JC); Todd Pinkston, WR, Fr. (RS); Jamie Purser, P, Fr.

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Booth (95 att., 457 yds., 3 TD); Passing: Graham (309, att., 161., comp., 18 INT, 15 TD, 1816 yds.); Receiving: Pearson (32 rec., 392 yds., 1 TD); Tackles: Kenney (93); Sacks: Jackson (3).

Site: Hattiesburg, Miss. **Stadium:** Roberts (33,000).

Last league title won: New League.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—at Georgia
Sept. 7—at Alabama
Sept. 14—Utah State
Sept. 21—SW Louisiana
Sept. 28—at Louisville
Oct. 10—at East Carolina

Oct. 19—Memphis
Oct. 26—at Tulane
Nov. 2—Cincinnati
Nov. 9—at Houston
Nov. 16—at Florida State

4. MEMPHIS

Offensive strengths: Center Ken Newton anchors a line that will be bolstered by a pair of JC signees. Quarterback Qadry Anderson showed flashes of excellence as a true freshman, and he'll be better with a spring under his belt.

Offensive weaknesses: The backfield has been stripped to the point that cornerback Keith Cobb was moved to tailback this spring. The Tigers, who averaged just 254.4 yards in total offense last season, are hoping for help at the skill positions from their incoming recruits.

Defensive strengths: Traditionally, the Tigers have been tough to run against, and with tackle Tony Williams, end Marvin Thomas, free safety Keith Spann and linebackers Richard Hogans and Jesse Allen, that's likely to be the case again.

Defensive weaknesses: Foes averaged 4.7 yards per play last year. Again, Memphis will turn to its new recruits to fill holes up front and in the secondary.

Special teams: Kicker Drew Pairamore is back, but he made only four field goals last season. Kickoff specialist Jimmy Keith is the leading punting candidate. Return ace Ryan Roskelly is gone.

Key to success: The Tigers must find a way to get their defense off the field. Memphis had single-digit point totals in five games last season and scored 10 points in another.

Outlook: Coach Rip Scherer may have laid the foundation for the rebuilding process with this year's recruiting class, but the Tigers will have to overachieve to crack the top half of the conference standings.

TIGERS DATA

Coach: Rip Scherer (3-8, 1 year).

1995 record: 3-8 as an independent.

Key losses: Bryan Barnett, DT; Darius Blevins, FB; Dan Bonner, DE; Joe Borich, QB; Frank Fletcher, RB; Davis Marsh, OT; Rod Mason, DE; Joel Peschke, TE; Ryan Roskelly, FL/KR; Keith Setler, G; Chris Smith, CB; Jerome

THE PRESSURE'S ON

Southern Miss' Graham battling to stay starter

When Heath Graham enrolled at Southern Mississippi in 1993, he was labeled the Golden Eagles' next outstanding quarterback.

Three springs and 17 consecutive starts later, Graham finds himself locked in a duel for his job with senior Chris Windsor, the junior college player of the year in some circles in 1994.

"Competition is healthy, I know that," Graham says. "But I know I can do the job. ... I'm not comfortable being a backup."

Windsor, rarely called upon by coach Jeff Bower as a junior, thinks his time may be at hand.



Graham

"I still have a ways to go, but I'm reacting better to the different situations," says Windsor, who attempted seven passes last season. "The more experience I get, the more comfortable I feel."

Bower sees the battle as a nice problem: "It's like any other position. The guy that is playing the best deserves to be playing, period."

Whereas Graham is a dropback passer, Windsor is a scrambler who can make a defense pay for losing containment.

Graham was a star athlete at Stringer High School, located in a small rural town about 40 minutes northeast of Hattiesburg. After a redshirt year, he supplanted veteran starter Tommy Waters six games into the '94 season. The Golden Eagles went 4-2, scaring Alabama and winning at LSU. Graham completed 58.2 percent of his passes for 1,603 yards but yielded 15 interceptions. He threw for seven touchdowns.

As a sophomore, Graham threw for 1,816 yards but interceptions again were a bugaboo. He had 18, compared to 15 touchdown passes. "I think Heath went through a little bit of the ol' sophomore slump," Bower says.

"It wasn't as bad it might have been," Graham says. "There were some things I could have done better—we were in position to win 10 games (the Eagles wound up with six victories)."

Although Graham seemed secure as the quarterback of the future, Windsor was a talent too good to pass up. After playing at Jones County JC in Mississippi, Windsor transferred to Garden City (Kan.) CC in '94 and passed for 2,300 yards and ran for 900 more.

The two quarterbacks duked it out during the spring, with Windsor seizing the No. 1 spot early and Graham bouncing back in later scrimmages. The duel will carry over to the fall.

—TIM DOHERTY

Woods, SS.

Starters returning: **Offense (6):** Qadry Anderson, QB, 6-2/193, Sr.; Chancy Carr, WR, 5-10/195, Jr.; Daniel Gomez, G, 6-5/275, Jr.; Josh Miller, G, 6-2/279, Sr.; Ken Newton, C, 6-3/290, Sr.; Ron Sells, T, 6-5/285, Soph. **Defense (6):** Jesse Allen, LB, 6-3/237, Sr.; Kevin Cobb, CB, 5-10/175, Jr.; Richard Hogans, LB, 6-2/250, Sr.; Keith Spann, FS, 6-1/205, Sr.; Marvin Thomas, E, 6-5/256, Sr.; Tony Williams, T, 6-2/266, Sr. **Kicker (1):** Drew Pairmore, K, 6-1/208, Jr.

Other key returnees: Keith Cobb, TB (moved from CB), Jr.; Marcus Gary, LB, Sr.; Tim Hart, DT, Sr.; Ernest Keefer, WR, Sr.; Jimmy Keith, P, Sr.; Robby Locklear, TB, Soph.; Chris Powers, TE, Soph.; Anthony Reddick, SS, Jr.; Chris Reeves, FB, Jr.; Shaun Sands, TB, Soph.; Jeremy Stewart, SS, Soph.

Top newcomers: Damien Dodson, WR, Fr.; Kenton Evans, QB, Fr.; Ben Gleason, OT, Jr. (JC); Jason Kellen, P, Fr.; Tramont Lawless, DE, Fr. (RS); Mike McKenzie, CB, Fr. (RS); Tavares Middlebrooks, OT, Fr. (RS); Justin Mumm, OT, Jr. (JC); Jeremy Scruggs, FB, Fr. (RS); Tim Seymour, DT, Fr.; Ian Williams, QB/WR, Fr. (RS).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Sands (40 att., 155 yds., 0 TD); **Passing:** Anderson (87 att., 37 comp., 4 INT, 1 TD, 490 yds.); **Receiving:** Carr (18 rec., 317 yds., 1 TD); **Tackles:** Hogans (111); **Sacks:** Thomas (6).

Site: Memphis, Tenn. **Stadium:** Liberty Bowl (62,380).

Last league title won: New league.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—Miami (Fla.)	Oct. 19—at Southern Miss
Sept. 7—Miss. State	Oct. 26—at SW Louisiana
Sept. 14—at Missouri	Nov. 2—at Louisville
Sept. 21—Tulane	Nov. 9—Tennessee
Oct. 5—Cincinnati	Nov. 23—East Carolina
Oct. 12—at Houston	

5. HOUSTON

Offensive strengths: It's not the run-and-shoot anymore, but quarterback Chuck Clements still can air it out, passing for 2,641 yards and 15 touchdowns last year. Receivers Damion Johnson and Charles West combined for 81 catches. The rushing of Antowain Smith and Jermaine Williams will be bolstered by touted freshman Ketric Sanford.

Offensive weaknesses: Somebody will have to open the holes and keep Clements upright. Guard Greg Brown, center Ben Fricke and tackle Marcus Spriggs return up front, with Spriggs bouncing from the right side to the left.

Defensive strengths: Fireplug Gary Haynes can clog the middle at tackle, and linebacker Mike Parker has notched 206 tackles as a two-year starter.

Defensive weaknesses: The secondary and line will be filled with newcomers. Four JC signees, including linebacker Vaughn Washington, are expected to step in right away to help fill the gaps.

Special teams: Kickers Toby Johnson and Sebastian Villarreal combined to go 7-of-12 on field-goal attempts last year. Punter Ignacio Saucedo missed spring drills after knee surgery.

Key to success: Defensive improvement is a must. The Cougars allowed 455.1 yards per game in their final season in the Southwest Conference.

Outlook: Coach Kim Helton finally has a



Strong-armed quarterback Chuck Clements has to approximate his 1995 numbers if Houston is to have success this season.

team he can call his own after taking over a program hit hard by NCAA sanctions. Houston still is 10 scholarships short of the NCAA-maximum 85. Clements can put up points. The big question: Will the defense stop anybody?

COUGARS DATA

Coach: Kim Helton (4-28-1, 3 years).

1995 record: 2-9. SWC: 2-6/6th.

Key losses: Carlos Chester, DE; Jimmy Herndon, OT; Larkay James, WR; Dedric Mathis, CB; Thomas McGaughey, SS; Gerome Williams, FS; Steven Williams, G.

Starters returning: **Offense (8):** Greg Brown, G, 6-1/294, Soph.; Chuck Clements, QB, 6-3/200, Sr.; Ben Fricke, C, 6-0/277, Jr.; Rodney Griffin, TE, 6-3/260, Soph.; Damion Johnson, WR, 6-1/186, Sr.; Antowain Smith, RB, 6-2/224, Sr.; Marcus Spriggs, T, 6-3/295, Sr.; Charles West, WR, 5-9/185, Sr. **Defense (8):** Reggie Davis, LB, 6-1/239, Jr.; Rusty Foster, E, 6-2/246, Jr.; Thomathan Good, CB, 5-11/197, Jr.; Gary Haynes, T, 6-0/300, Sr.; Delmonico Montgomery, CB, 5-11/183, Sr.; Mike Parker, LB, 6-1/216, Jr.; James Reddish, SS, 6-0/213, Sr.; Leonta Rheams, T, 6-2/272, Jr. **Kickers (3):** Toby Johnson, K, 6-0/204, Soph.; Ignacio Saucedo, P, 5-10/211, Soph.; Sebastian Villarreal, K, 5-9/168, Jr.

Other key returnees: James Brown, DE, Jr.; Wilbert Brown, G, Soph.; DeKeithron Callicoattee, S, Soph. (RS/academics); Ahmad Charles, DE, Soph.; James deGroot, WR, Soph. (RS/injury); Louis Hampton, DE, Soph.; Jay McGuire, RB, Jr.; Chad Shaw, LB, Jr. Mike Smith, CB, Soph. (RS/academics); Jermaine Williams, RB, Sr.; Robbie Wheeler, WR, Soph.; Wayne Wheeler, G, Sr. (RS/academics).

Top newcomers: Corey Bradshaw, DB, Soph. (Prop 48); Michael DeRouselle, DE, Fr. (RS); Damon Harris, CB, Soph. (JC); Ryan Hendrickson, OT, Fr.; Patterson Owens, DE, Jr. (JC); Devon Pender, DB, Jr. (JC); Scott Regimbald, TE, Fr.; Marcus Sanders, DL, Fr.; Ketric Sanford, RB, Fr.; Antoine Simpson, DL, Jr. (JC); Halley Spencer, WR, Fr. (RS); Vaughn Washington, MLB, Jr. (JC).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Smith (152 att., 608 yds., 5 TD); **Passing:** Clements (437 att., 245 comp., 11 INT, 15 TD, 2,641 yds.); **Receiving:** West (50 rec., 548 yds., 2 TD); **Tackles:** Parker (107); **Sacks:** Davis (3). **Site:** Houston. **Stadium:** Astrodomo (60,000)/Robertson (22,000).

Last league title won: None.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—Sam Houston State	Oct. 19—at Cincinnati
Sept. 7—at Louisiana State	Oct. 26—North Carolina
Sept. 14—at Pittsburgh	Nov. 2—at Tulane
Sept. 21—Southern California	Nov. 9—Southern Miss
Oct. 5—at SW Louisiana	Nov. 16—Louisville
Oct. 12—Memphis	

6. TULANE

Offensive strengths: Tailback Jamaican Dartez was a ray of hope as a freshman, rushing for 544 yards and 10 touchdowns. Receiver Derrick Franklin can be a big-play artist, and tight end Cory Geason is one of the finest in the nation.

Offensive weaknesses: Sophomore starter Shaun King or JC signee Xavier Salazar must rev up a passing game that averaged only 169.9 yards. The line, featuring center Russ Meissner, tackle Cyril Brockmeier and guard Greg Gerthe, has hit the weights hard but needs to be more aggressive.

Defensive strengths: Linebacker Derrick Singleton and tackle Keith Cook can flat-out play in a unit that may surprise a few people.

Defensive weaknesses: The secondary has holes that likely will be plugged by signees. The depth is better and more talented but oh-so-green.

Special teams: Brad Palazzo returns to handle the kicking chores, and receiver Jeff Lignon is one of the better return men in the league. Brad Hill is the front-runner to take over the punting.

Key to success: The defense must slow down the touchdown parade. In six of Tulane's nine losses, the Green Wave allowed 29 or more points (including 32, 34, 45 and 35 in the last four games).

Outlook: This year's Wave will be the deepest, strongest and most athletic bunch in coach Buddy Teevens' five years. But with miles of ground to make up, the improvement is not likely to translate directly to the won-lost column.

GREEN WAVE DATA

Coach: Buddy Teevens (9-36, 4 years; 48-67-2, 11 years overall).

1995 record: 2-9 as an independent.

Key losses: Cedric Anderson, S; Monte Burke, LB; Jeff Dean, DE; Danny Lasseigne, P; Steve Schuler, OT.

Starters returning: **Offense (10):** Cyril Brockmeier, T, 6-7/304, Sr.; Will Carlisle, G, 6-5/295, Sr.; Kevin Cunane, TE, 6-3/241, Sr.; Jamaican Dartez, TB, 5-7/187, Soph.; Derrick Franklin, WR, 6-1/177, Sr.; Todd Hunter, T, 6-6/311, Sr.; Tom Jackson, C, 6-3/252, Sr.; Shaun King, QB, 6-0/201, Soph.; Jeff Lignon, WR, 5-11/189, Sr.; Jerald Sowell, FB, 6-1/238, Sr. **Defense (8):** Tellius Carr, CB, 5-11/175, Soph.; Keith Cook, T, 6-5/267, Sr.; Elijah Freeman, S, 5-11/178, Sr.; Dwight Jones, E, 6-1/226, Jr.; Michael Jordan, CB, 5-9/168, Soph.; Dennis O'Sullivan, T, 6-4/284, Soph.; Derrick Singleton, LB, 6-1/220, Jr.; Brian Williams, LB, 6-0/236, Jr. **Kicker (1):** Brad Palazzo, K, 5-11/181, Soph.

Other key returnees: Terence Cook, DT, Jr.; Manny Cuellar, DE, Soph.; P.J. Franklin, WR, Soph.; Cory Geason, TE, Jr.; Mike Gurniela, OT, Soph.; Brad Hill, P, Jr.; Don Jackson, LB, Sr.; Shane Marshall, DE, Jr.; Pat Miller, S, Sr.; Russ Meissner, C, Sr.; Horace Raymond, TB, Jr.; Brett Timmons, LB, Soph. **Top newcomers:** Kevin Dukes, S, Fr. (RS); Jerry Godfrey, G, Fr. (RS); Greg Gerthe, G, Soph. (RS); Noel Ellis, S, Fr.; Sam Knight, CB, Fr.; Xavier Salazar, QB, Jr. (JC); O'Kie Woods, FB, Fr. (RS).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Dartez (150 att., 544 yds., 10 TD); **Passing:** King (199 att., 92 comp., 7 INT, 2 TD, 1046 yds.); **Receiving:** Franklin (29 rec., 462 yds., 1 TD); **Tackles:** Singleton (77); **Sacks:** Jones (5).

Site: New Orleans. **Stadium:** Louisiana Superdome (70,892).

Last league title won: New league.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 30—at Cincinnati	Oct. 26—Southern Mississippi
Sept. 14—Rice	Nov. 2—Houston
Sept. 21—at Memphis	Nov. 9—Syracuse
Oct. 5—Texas Christian	Nov. 16—at Navy
Oct. 12—Louisville	Nov. 23—at LSU
Oct. 19—at Army	

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SCOUTING CONFERENCE USA

Ascending: Cincinnati. From the ashes of their 2-8-1 season in 1994, the Bearcats fashioned a 6-5 mark last season by winning five of their final six games. With 22 seniors returning, Cincinnati is poised to post consecutive winning seasons for the first time in 14 years.

Descending: Memphis. Three consecutive 6-5 seasons weren't good enough for school officials, who dumped Chuck Stobart. Enter Rip Scherer, who found the cupboard nearly bare as his club plunged to 3-8 in 1995. Scherer's first recruiting class is a good start, but the rebuilding project will be a long-term effort.

Nightmare schedule: Southern Mississippi. True, the budget dictates that the Golden Eagles hit the road for big-guarantee games, but treks to Georgia and Alabama to open the season? East Carolina beckons for a midweek ESPN trip. The last stop on the road: Florida State.

Dream schedule: Cincinnati. Six games at home for the first time in eons. Virginia Tech and Kansas, opponents a year ago, have become Northeast Louisiana and Alabama-Birmingham. Kansas State and two C-USA toughies, Southern Miss and Louisville, are on the road, but two of the toughest three non-conference games, against Boston College and Kentucky, will be played at Nippert Stadium.

Best matchup of the year: Strictly from a historic perspective: Tulane at Cincinnati, August 31, the first-ever C-USA football game. The October 26 Cincy-Louisville game will go a long way toward deciding the C-USA champion.

Worst matchup of the year: Houston at LSU, September 7. The woeful Cougars playing in revived Death Valley? Not good.

Bowl bound: None? That's a distinct possibility. Yes, the C-USA champion has a tie-in with the Liberty Bowl, but thanks to the last remnants of the old Liberty Bowl Association, the scenario goes like this: If East Carolina has as good or a better overall record than the C-USA titlist, the bowl has the option of taking the Pirates for the third consecutive year. Just a guess, but that likely means the C-USA winner has to go 8-3. That's a tall order, given the non-conference schedule of most C-USA schools and the relative parity in the league.

Biggest shoes to fill: Louisville quarterback Marty Lowe's. He passed for 2,268 yards and 16 touchdowns last season and was named the Cardinals' MVP. Jason Payne and Chris Redman will try to shoe-horn their way to prominence.

Most overrated player: Southern Miss RB Harold Shaw. By this time, Shaw was supposed to be one of the biggest names across the football-mad South. It hasn't happened. Yet. In Shaw's defense, nagging injuries trashed his sophomore season and a hamstring pull sidelined him for the last half of spring practice. If healthy, Shaw may be ready for a breakout performance.

Most underrated player: Tulane LB Derrick Singleton. All the former prep quar-

HONOR ROLL

Best offensive backfield: Southern Mississippi.
Best wide receivers: Cincinnati.
Best offensive line: Southern Mississippi.
Best defensive line: Louisville.
Best linebackers: Cincinnati.
Best secondary: Louisville.
Best special teams: Cincinnati.
Hardest hitter: Tyrus McCloud, LB, Louisville.
Best backup QB: Lee Roberts, Southern Mississippi.
Best pro prospect: Sam Madison, CB, Louisville.
Best game-day atmosphere: Louisville.

RANKING THE RECRUITING

Top recruit in parentheses

1. Houston (RB Ketric Sanford): Immediate help is on the horizon, with four JC impact players (LB Vaughn Washington, DL Antoine Simpson, DE Patterson Owens, DB Devon Pender), plus Sanford, DB Corey Bradshaw and DL Marcus Sanders.
2. Southern Mississippi (OL Sherrick Blackburn).
3. Memphis (WR Damien Dodson).
4. Cincinnati (FB Landon Smith).
5. Tulane (QB Xavier Salazar).
6. Louisville (DE Derrick Kennedy).

terback does is make plays. He led the Green Wave in tackles and tackles for losses in '95 and ranked second in pass breakups.

Best coach: School's still out, with four of the league's coaches having less than four years' experience under their belt. But you have to like what Rick Minter has done at Cincinnati and what Jeff Bower is accomplishing at Southern Miss.

Best staff: Southern Miss easily could have packed it in last season. First came heart-breaking, last-minute losses to Alabama, Indiana, Cincinnati and East Carolina, then a blowout at Tennessee. But the Golden Eagles hung tough and pulled out two victories to close the season at 6-5. A tip of the cap to Bower and all of his aides, who as a group didn't allow things to unravel.

Coach on the hot seat: Tulane's Buddy Teevens. After four years under Teevens, Tulane has nine wins, including a forfeit against Alabama. Patience has been a virtue, but Teevens realizes his squad needs to produce, particularly with 21 seniors on hand.

Best bets: Should Cincinnati continue its winning ways, look for another raid on the Bearcats' coaching staff, including Rick Minter. ... Barring injury, Houston quarterback Chuck Clements will attain the 2,000-yard passing plateau for the second consecutive year. ... Louisville linebacker Tyrus McCloud will lead the Cardinals in tackles for the third consecutive season and teams will continue to throw away from Cardinals cornerback Sam Madison. ... As many as 10 players in Memphis' signing class will see playing time.

Odds and ends: If bloodlines mean anything, you've got to like Memphis tailback Shaun Sands and Louisville safety John Fuqua. Sands is the nephew of Dallas Cowboys wide receiver Michael Irvin and

PREDICTIONS

ALL-CONFERENCE USA

OFFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
WR	ROBERT TATE, Cincinnati	5-10/190	Sr.
WR	MIGUEL MONTANO, Louisville	5-10/181	Jr.
TE	CORY GEASON, Tulane	6-3/250	Jr.
T	DARRYL TERRELL, Southern Miss	6-5/310	Sr.
T	JASON FABINI, Cincinnati	6-7/300	Jr.
G	GREG BROWN, Houston	6-1/294	Soph.
G	STEVE MISETIC, Louisville	6-5/277	Sr.
C	KEN NEWTON, Memphis	6-3/290	Sr.
QB	CHUCK CLEMENTS, Houston	6-3/200	Sr.
RB	JAMAICAN DARTZ, Tulane	5-7/187	Soph.
RB	ORLANDO SMITH, Cincinnati	6-1/245	Jr.

DEFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
E	ROBERT BROWN, Southern Miss	6-3/255	Jr.
T	KEITH COOK, Tulane	6-5/267	Sr.
T	DARRIUS FELDER, Cincinnati	6-5/269	Sr.
E	KENDRICK GHOLSTON, Louisville	6-3/249	Jr.
LB	BRAD JACKSON, Cincinnati	6-2/205	Jr.
LB	TYRUS MCLOUD, Louisville	6-2/251	Sr.
LB	DERRICK SINGLETON, Tulane	6-1/220	Jr.
CB	ROD THOMAS, Southern Miss	6-2/189	Sr.
CB	SAM MADISON, Louisville	5-11/174	Sr.
S	KEITH SPANN, Memphis	6-1/205	Sr.
S	SAM GARNES, Cincinnati	6-4/215	Sr.

SPECIALISTS

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
K	ERIC RICHARDS, Cincinnati	5-8/180	Jr.
P	JEREMY BORSETH, Louisville	6-2/189	Soph.
KR	ROBERT TATE, Cincinnati	5-10/190	Sr.

PLAYERS OF THE YEAR



OFFENSE:

ROBERT TATE
WR, Cincinnati



DEFENSE:

SAM MADISON
CB, Louisville

NEWCOMERS OF THE YEAR:

OFFENSE: Ketric Sanford, RB, Houston
DEFENSE: Leland Taylor, T, Louisville

Fuqua is the son of former Pittsburgh Steelers running back Frenchy Fuqua. ... C-USA will have a televised game of the week, syndicated through Liberty Sports Network. ... Memphis hasn't had a back reach 100 yards in 14 games.

—TIM DOHERTY

1. MIAMI

Offensive strengths: Quarterback Sam Ricketts got his chance last year when starter Neil Dougherty was injured and proceeded to lead Miami to one of the most prolific offensive seasons in school history. Ricketts' improvement was profound in the last three games, when he threw nine touchdown passes and just one interception. Standout guard Mike Bird, along with center Matt Cravens and tackles Mark Sroka and Chris Rhodes, returns from a line that helped Miami average 205.5 yards rushing per game.

Offensive weaknesses: It's up to Ty King to lead Miami's rushing game now that Deland McCullough, the MAC's all-time leading rusher, is gone.

Defensive strengths: Miami ranked second in the nation in total defense (251.6) last year, so it figures to be tough as leather with nine starters returning. Dee Osborne, perhaps the MAC's top defender, leads a strong unit of linebackers that also includes JoJuan Armour and Kenyon Harper. The secondary had a school-record 22 interceptions in 1995.

Defensive weaknesses: With so many starters returning from such a great 1995 unit, it's hard to find any holes. But one of the two starters missing is MAC Defensive Player of the Year Johnnie Williams. It appears only overconfidence can hurt this group.

Special teams: The Redskins have three untested players bidding to replace kicker Chad Seitz, the school's No. 2 all-time scorer. That's a concern. Jason Cheney is a quality punter who averaged 40.9 yards last year. Tremayne Banks opened eyes last year by averaging 13.3 yards per punt return.

Key to success: Not falling victim to the label of favorite. Miami should win the crown, but any stumble could mean a hard tumble in the standings.

Outlook: Miami has all the components to be a dominating team. The defense could be one of the MAC's best in recent years, and the offense should good, too. Pencil the Redskins in as champs.

REDSKINS DATA

Coach: Randy Walker (34-27-5, 6 years).

1995 record: 8-2-1. MAC: 6-1-1/2nd.

Key losses: Brad Carlisle, DE; Gene Guidry, G; Eric Henderson, WR; Deland McCullough, TB; Chad Seitz, K; Johnnie Williams, FS.

Starters returning: **Offense (8):** Jeremy Adkins, HB, 6-1/230, Jr.; Tremayne Banks, WR, 5-10/180, Sr.; Eric Beverly, TE, 6-4/255, Sr.; Mike Bird, G, 6-2/295, Jr.; Matt Cravens, C, 6-4/275, Sr.; Chris Rhodes, T, 6-2/265, Sr.; Sam Ricketts, QB, 6-2/215, Jr.; Mark Sroka, T, 6-5/285, Jr. **Defense (9):** JoJuan Armour, OLB, 6-1/205, Soph.; Kenyon Harper, MLB, 6-3/225, Sr.; Jason Havens, T, 6-4/261, Jr.; Jason Holmes, E, 6-3/251, Sr.; Patrice Morgan, T, 6-3/250, Jr.; Dee Osborne, OLB, 6-2/215, Sr.; Ernest Perry, SS, 5-11/190, Sr.; Cleon Plummer, CB, 6-2/200, Sr.; Jamie Taylor, CB, 5-9/170, Jr. **Kickers (1):** Jason Cheney, P, 6-2/185, Sr.

Other key returnees: Ryan Abel, MLB, Soph.; Ray Barnes, WR, Soph.; Chad Brightman, DE, Jr.; Jeff Cheeks, CB, Jr.; Jason Druso, FS, Jr.; Jay Hall, FL, Soph.; Ty King, TB, Sr.; Ed Marut, DT, Soph.; John Scott, K, Soph.; Jason Simmons, DE, Soph.; Ted Slec, G, Soph.; Marcus Stepp, DT, Jr.; Damian Vaughn, HB, Jr.

Top newcomers: Ray Barnes, WR, Soph. (JC); Dustin Cohen, OLB, Fr. (RS); Corey Estell, DL, Fr.; Andy Habing, DE, Fr. (RS); Chris Huelsman, G, Fr. (RS); Chris Kalafatis, OT, Fr. (RS); Kent McCullough, K/P, Fr.; Don Nielsen, QB, Fr. (RS); Josh Romberg, G, Fr. (RS).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** King (96 att., 470 yds., 6 TD); **Passing:** Ricketts (211 att., 108 comp., 7 INT, 14 TD, 1,337 yds.); **Receiving:** Banks (44 rec., 733 yds., 5 TD);

MID-AMERICAN Conference Rank: 9

By DOUG ZALESKI

PREDICTIONS

1. MIAMI
2. BALL STATE
3. EASTERN MICHIGAN
4. TOLEDO
5. BOWLING GREEN
6. WESTERN MICHIGAN
7. CENTRAL MICHIGAN
8. AKRON
9. KENT
10. OHIO

Tackles: Osborne (126); **Sacks:** Armour (7).
Site: Oxford, Ohio. **Stadium:** Yager (25,183).
Last league title won: 1986.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—Kent	Oct. 12—at Eastern Michigan
Sept. 7—at Ball State	Oct. 19—at Akron
Sept. 14—at Indiana	Oct. 26—Army
Sept. 21—Bowling Green	Nov. 2—at Toledo
Sept. 28—at Cincinnati	Nov. 9—Ohio
Oct. 5—Central Michigan	

2. BALL STATE

Offensive strengths: Ball State found a gem at tailback last year in LeAndre

Moore, who proved to be a nice complement for do-everything tailback/fullback/slotback Michael Blair. Quarterback Brent Baldwin is a good decision-maker and Tony Roush is a star guard.

Offensive weaknesses: The Cardinals geared too much of their offense around Blair last season. Their goal in 1996 is to find more weapons, but that may be tough with a nondescript group of receivers.

Defensive strengths: Strong safety Cory Gilliard is one of the top players in the conference. He hits hard and is rarely out of position. Howard Simms, Aaron Gralak and Jeff Phelps form a strong linebacking trio that combined for 217 tackles last year.

Defensive weaknesses: Despite ranking second in the MAC in total defense last year, Ball State ranked only fifth in turnovers forced. Somebody has to step in at end and pressure quarterbacks the way departed Keith McKenzie did last year.

Special teams: Brad Maynard, who earned All-American mention from many organizations last season after pacing the nation with a 46.5-yard punting average, returns to add to his legacy. Kicker Brent Locklear doesn't have great range, but he was deadly inside 40 yards last season (10-of-14). Keyon Laws is a threat as a punt and kickoff returner.

Key to success: An inexperienced receiving corps last year led to a predictable offense. Unless Ball State, which boasts the best record in the MAC over the past three seasons, can overcome the same problem this year, it's hard to expect much progress.

Outlook: As long as the offense develops and matures, Ball State should contend for the MAC championship.

CARDINALS DATA

Coach: Bill Lynch (7-4, 1 year; 43-16-3 overall, 6 years).
1995 record: 7-4. MAC: 6-2/3rd.



In his first year as a starter, Eastern Michigan's Charlie Batch helped the Eagles set a ton of school offensive records in '95, when he finished fourth in the nation in total offense.

Key losses: Barry Clark, S; Jermaine Daniels, DT; Carlos Davis, OT; Mike Freel, C; Keith McKenzie, DE.

Starters returning: **Offense (9):** Brent Baldwin, QB, 6-2/193, Sr.; Michael Blair, TB, 6-0/240, Sr.; Brent Campbell, WR, 6-1/203, Jr.; Manuel Compas, WR, 5-9/170, Soph.; Jason Kent, FB, 5-10/198, Sr.; Mike Kerrigan, G, 6-1/253, Sr.; Joe Magee, T, 6-2/285, Sr.; Tony Roush, G, 6-3/305, Sr.; Brian VanDaele, TE, 6-2/256, Jr. **Defense (8):** Raphael Ball, CB, 5-10/173, Sr.; Cory Gilliard, SS, 6-1/204, Sr.; Aaron Gralak, OLB, 6-2/211, Sr.; Grant Gray, CB, 5-11/176, Sr.; Damon Hummel, T, 6-4/237, Soph.; Jeff Phelps, OLB, 6-1/228, Jr.; Howard Simms, ILB, 6-1/229, Jr.; Brian Williams, E, 5-11/221, Sr. **Kickers (2):** Brent Locklear, K, 5-10/174, Jr.; Brad Maynard, P, 6-1/175, Sr.

Other key returnees: Ed Abernathy, WR, Sr.; Lloyd Brown, OLB, Jr.; Marcellus Davis, WR, Sr. (RS); Phil Henry, C, Sr.; Keyon Laws, S/KR, Jr.; Hiram Maddox, DT, Jr.; Travis McNew, OT, Sr.; LeAndre Moore, TB, Soph.; Jerad O'Risky, DE, Jr.; Mike Pickett, FB, Soph.; Troy Ramey, S, Jr.; Dane Wheeler, TE, Soph.; Jason Wize, WR, Soph.

Top newcomers: Kevin Cartwright, TB, Fr.; Jake Josetti, QB, Fr. (RS)

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Blair (218 att., 819 yds., 4 TD); **Passing:** Baldwin (202 att., 119 comp., 8 INT, 5 TD, 1,192 yds.); **Receiving:** Abernathy (31 rec., 288 yds., 4 TD); **Tackles:** Gilliard (100); **Sacks:** Williams and Gralak (3). **Site:** Muncie, Ind. **Stadium:** Ball State (21,581). **Last league title won:** 1993.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 29—at Kansas	Oct. 19—at Bowling Green
Sept. 7—Miami (Ohio)	Oct. 26—at Central Michigan
Sept. 14—at Minnesota	Nov. 2—at Eastern Michigan
Sept. 21—Central Florida	Nov. 9—Kent
Oct. 5—at Western Michigan	Nov. 16—Toledo
Oct. 12—Ohio	

3. EASTERN MICHIGAN

Offensive strengths: Quarterback Charlie Batch emerged from unknown status last season to become the top-rated passer in the MAC and rank fourth in the nation in total offense. Tailback Savon Edwards is a capable rusher and a key part of the passing attack. If healthy, the line—paced by guard Mike Erickson and center Matt Gregory—could be an asset.

Offensive weaknesses: Batch lost his key targets with the graduation of receivers Steve Clay and Bristol Greene and tight end Ryan Wheatley. The eight players trying to make up for the loss of the 126 receptions by Clay, Greene and Wheatley combined for just 59 receptions in 1995.

Defensive strengths: The secondary isn't flashy and lacks big interception numbers, but it is the most efficient position on the defense and returns all four starters. Rodney Nubin has been a fixture at cornerback the past two seasons, and outside linebacker Avery Brown is a standout. Tackle Kevin Kwiatkowski hopes to rebound to All-MAC status after a subpar 1995.

Defensive weaknesses: The Eagles' defensive front seven doesn't come up with enough big plays and lacks consistency because of a lack of athletic ability. Being too soft up front resulted in opponents rushing for 214.9 yards per game in '95.

Special teams: Kicker Justin Ventura was a dependable 11-of-14 on field-goal attempts in his first season last year. Punting is an unknown since the job likely will be handled by a first-year player.

Key to success: The Eagles can't fade down the stretch as they did last season, when they dropped four of their final six games.

Outlook: Eastern feels it will be better equipped than last year, when coach Rick Rasnick and his staff took over just two months before spring practice. That's

scary for other league teams, since the limited preparation time didn't prevent the Eagles from smashing 43 school records in 1995. EMU could steal the title this season.

EAGLES DATA

Coach: Rick Rasnick (6-5, 1 year). **1995 record:** 6-5. **MAC:** 5-3/5th.

Key losses: Mark Anderson, OLB; Steve Clay, FL; Jay Gardiola, P; Bristol Greene, SE; Bob Johnson, NG; Mike Lighter, OT; James Lowe, DE; Reese McCaskill, MLB; Kwesi Ramsey, OLB; Barry Stokes, OT; Mike Thomas, DB; Ryan Wheatley, TE; Tom Woodbury, G.

Starters returning: **Offense (4):** Charlie Batch, QB, 6-2/210, Sr.; Savon Edwards, TB, 5-7/165, Jr.; Mike Erickson, G, 6-3/274, Sr.; Matt Gregory, C, 6-3/265, Sr. **Defense (5):** Corey Baskin, CB, 5-9/155, Jr.; Avery Brown, OLB, 6-3/238, Jr.; Kevin Kwiatkowski, T, 6-4/270, Sr.; Rodney Nubin, CB, 6-0/195, Sr.; Terry Reed, FS, 5-11/185, Jr. **Kickers (1):** Justin Ventura, K, 5-8/184, Soph.

Other key returnees: Kevin Allar, TE, Sr.; Dave Berney, OLB, Sr.; Don Broussard, LB, Soph. (RS/elbow); Reco Bryant, WR, Jr. (RS); Marcus Cox, SS, Sr.; Frank Czapski, G, Jr. (RS/injuries); Lionel Dalton, NT, Jr.; Devin Grant, OLB, Sr.; Mark Langkos, LB, Sr.; Gurald Lewis, DT, Sr.; Freddie Nelson, WR, Sr.; Frank Rocca, OT, Sr.; L.J. Shelton, OT, Soph.

Top newcomers: Jason Beam, TE, Fr. (RS); Mark Crnkovic, FB, Jr. (JC); Lawrence Davis, RB, Soph. (Prop 48); Jeremy Lingenfelter, ILB, Fr. (RS); Tom Michel, C, Fr. (RS); Corey Smith, DL, Fr. (RS); Idris Wells, RB, Fr.; Mencil Williams, OL, Jr. (JC).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Edwards (148 att., 732 yds., 2 TD); **Passing:** Batch (421 att., 244 comp., 17 INT, 21 TD, 3,177 yds.); **Receiving:** Edwards (43 rec., 432 yds., 3 TD); **Tackles:** Brown (110); **Sacks:** Brown (10). **Site:** Ypsilanti, Mich. **Stadium:** Rynearson (30,200). **Last league title won:** 1987.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—Temple	Oct. 12—Miami (Ohio)
Sept. 7—at Wisconsin	Oct. 19—at Central Michigan
Sept. 14—at Western Michigan	Oct. 26—Kent
Sept. 21—Toledo	Nov. 2—Ball State
Sept. 28—at Michigan State	Nov. 9—Akron
Oct. 5—at Ohio	

4. TOLEDO

Offensive strengths: Running back Wasean Tait holds virtually all of Toledo's rushing records after last year's 1,905-yard effort. He gained 140 or more yards in every game in 1995. Quarterback Ryan Huzjak had a MAC-best touchdown-to-interception ratio last year of 15-5.

Offensive weaknesses: Only one starting lineman is back and the Rockets lost All-MAC tight end Steve Rosi, which means new blockers must be found if Tait is to repeat as MAC Player of the Year.

Defensive strengths: Outside linebacker Craig Dues is the impact player on an experienced defense. He had six interceptions last year. Including fumbles caused and recovered, Dues had a hand in 11 of Toledo's 34 takeaways last season. Fellow linebacker Jamie Johnson is worth watching.

Defensive weaknesses: The Rockets ranked last in the MAC in pass defense last year and lost the best player from their secondary and their best pass rusher.

Special teams: Toledo lost its kicker, but Ryan Klaier, the starter in 1994 before redshirting last season, should step in. Punter Ty Grude had the MAC's second-best average last year (42.8), while Dwayne Harris is a dangerous kickoff returner.

Key to success: The new line opening holes for Tait like last year. If he gets bottled up, Huzjak can't carry the offense.

Outlook: The Rockets have enough talent to make a run at a second consecutive title,

THE PRESSURE'S ON

Have the Falcons crested with Blackney?

Losing records aren't supposed to happen at Bowling Green, which entering last season had posted a composite 39-13-2 record in the 1990s.

The program was about Las Vegas Bowl trips and MAC titles. In fact, the Falcons won consecutive MAC crowns in 1991 and '92, and went 9-2 overall (7-1 in the MAC) in 1994. Lots of players returned from that '94 unit, so expectations were high for 1995.

Things looked good after an early-season road victory at Missouri, but it all came tumbling down in the ugliness of a 5-6 mark. It was the school's first losing record since a 3-5-2 mark in 1990.

Falcons coach Gary Blackney, entering his sixth season, must right his listing ship and not let one bad year become two.

It didn't take long for change to occur. Five assistants with a combined 25 years of service at Bowling Green left. Blackney insists that had nothing to do with the trouble on the field, but others around the league had their doubts.

One of the reasons for the Falcons' mediocre year was turnovers. During its dominating run from 1991-94, Bowling Green was superb in turnover margin. Last year, though, the Falcons had eight more turnovers than takeaways.

Offensively, Bowling Green slipped from one of the league's best to an also-ran. The Falcons were blanked twice last season and scored just one touchdown on another occasion. It is hoped the return of Michael Farragalli will rectify that problem.

Farragalli, whose Bowling Green offenses led the MAC in scoring three times, was offensive coordinator from 1991-94 before leaving for what turned out to be a disastrous coaching stint of Toronto's CFL franchise. He was fired 11 games into the 1995 season.

"In the past, we always went into games saying that not only were we going to win, there was no way we were going to lose," Blackney said last season.

The Falcons have to regain that mentality to rise above the mediocre level they slumped to in 1995. It's up to Blackney to instill that attitude.

—DOUG ZALESKI



Blackney

but they also could stumble to the middle of the pack.

ROCKETS DATA

Coach: Gary Pinkel (34-19-3, 5 years).

1995 record: 11-0-1 (beat Nevada in Las Vegas Bowl). MAC: 7-0-1/1st.

Key losses: Jamal Belt, CB; Jerry Christensen, G; Erik Engel, FB; Steve Haynes, DE; Kevin Montgomery, OT; Brent Parkhill, ILB; Steve Rosi, TE; Mark Springs, K; Jim Steitz, OT; Pete Stone, C; Aristotle Wilson, OLB.

Starters returning: **Offense (5):** Ryan Huzjak, QB, 6-2/195, Sr.; Nate Johnson, G, 6-5/290, Sr.; Brock Kreitzburg, WR, 6-2/175, Soph.; James Spriggs, WR, 5-10/170, Sr.; Wasean Tait, TB, 5-8/175, Sr. **Defense (7):** Loren Burkey, E, 6-3/240, Jr.; Craig Dues, OLB, 6-0/185, Sr.; Mark Herron, FS, 6-0/173, Sr.; Jamie Johnson, ILB, 6-4/235, Sr.; Joey Jones, T, 6-1/260, Jr.; Clarence Love, CB, 5-10/176, Jr.; Jason Richards, T, 6-4/250, Jr. **Kickers (1):** Ty Grude, P, 6-1/194, Jr.

Other key returnees: James Bates, C, Jr.; Paul Dalmas, G, Sr.; Matt Fernandez, DE, Sr.; Mace Freeman, H-Back, Soph.; Dwayne Harris, TB/KR, Jr.; Ryan Klaer, K, Jr. (RS); Marcus Matthews, OLB, Jr.; Antjuan Savage, ILB, Soph.; Rasche Sumpter, CB, Jr.; Damon Walker, DT, Sr.; Rob Whitfield, OLB, Jr.; Chris Williams, OT, Jr.; Vince Wilson, WR, Sr.

Top newcomers: Todd Burch, CB, Fr. (RS); Andy Comer, OT, Fr. (RS); Nate Jackson, WR, Fr.; James Ross, DE, Jr. (transfer/Ohio State); Keith Travis, OLB, Fr. (RS); Jason Turner, WR, Fr. (RS).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Tait (357 att., 1,905 yds., 20 TD); **Passing:** Huzjak (273 att., 156 comp., 5 INT, 15 TD, 1,880 yds.); **Receiving:** Kreitzburg (23 rec., 256 yds., 1 TD); **Tackles:** Johnson (131); **Sacks:** Johnson (1).

Site: Toledo, Ohio. **Stadium:** Glass Bowl (26,248).

Last league title won: 1995.

SCHEDULE

Sept. 7—Indiana	Oct. 26—Western Michigan
Sept. 14—at Akron	Nov. 2—Miami (Ohio)
Sept. 21—at Eastern Michigan	Nov. 9—Central Michigan
Sept. 28—Weber State	Nov. 16—at Ball State
Oct. 5—Bowling Green	Nov. 23—at Ohio
Oct. 19—at Louisiana Tech	

5. BOWLING GREEN

Offensive strengths: Courtney Davis ranked second on the team with 282 yards rushing last season, and Bob Niemet, who started four games, is the best running quarterback in coach Gary Blackney's six seasons.

Offensive weaknesses: The line was hampered by injuries last season, which limited the offense, and the two best players of that group have graduated. Tailback Keylan Cates tore up his knee during the spring and will miss the season. **Defensive strengths:** Bowling Green has featured good linebackers the past few seasons, and this year is no exception with Kevin O'Neill and Adam Lige, the top two tacklers on the team last year, patrolling the inside.

Defensive weaknesses: Most starting spots in the line are unsettled. The secondary also is riddled with questions, with as many as nine players in contention for starting roles. The Falcons ranked next-to-last in the MAC in '95 with just seven fumbles recovered.

Special teams: Bowling Green is counting on sophomore Andy Pollock to assume punting and kicking chores. Davis doubles as a solid return man.

Key to success: Forgetting 1995, when the Falcons went from prohibitive title favorite to also-ran.

Outlook: All of the positive thinking in the world won't solve Bowling Green's lack of firepower on offense and defense. Another middle-of-the-pack finish is probable.

FALCONS DATA

Coach: Gary Blackney (41-14-2, 5 years).

1995 record: 5-6. MAC: 3-5/6th.



UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO

Toledo's Wasean Tait will have a tough time duplicating his '95 success, when he ran for 1,905 yards.

Key losses: Steve Ayers, CB; Chad Bukey, OT; Darius Card, FB; Greg Cepek, DE; Ryan Henry, QB; Derek Schorejs, K; Trevor Stover, TE; Andy Tracy, P; Jason Woullard, OLB.

Starters returning: **Offense (6):** Keylan Cates, TB, 6-1/225, Sr. (will miss season with knee injury); David Farrall, G, 6-2/270, Sr.; Shawn George, G, 6-4/280, Sr.; John Kuck, C, 6-4/260, Jr.; Jacque Rogers, WR, 6-2/180, Sr.; Eric Starks, WR, 5-11/170, Sr. **Defense (7):** Chioke Bradley, CB (moved from SS), 5-10/190, Jr.; Demetrius Carr, CB, 5-9/175, Jr.; Gardner Howard, T, 6-2/270, Jr.; Dan King, NT, 6-1/260, Soph.; Adam Lige, ILB, 5-11/210, Soph.; Kevin O'Neill, ILB, 6-1/230, Jr.; Orlando Rogers, FS, 5-9/175, Soph. **Kickers:** None.

Other key returnees: Dave Bruhowski, DE, Sr.; Todd Bush, OLB, Jr.; Courtney Davis, TB, Sr.; Tony Everhart, CB, Sr.; Sam Hemke, OT, Jr.; Brian Manns, OLB, Jr.; Bob Niemet, QB, Soph.; Andy Pollock, K/P, Soph.; Steve Sheets, OT, Sr.; Damon Smith, DT, Sr.; Willie Watson, DE, Jr.; Jamaine Williams, FS, Jr.; Junior Williams, SS, Soph.

Top newcomers: Tyrone Cole, CB, Fr. (RS); Chris Della Vella, LB, Fr.; Damron Hamilton, WR, Jr. (JC); Terry Loville, WR, Jr. (JC); Chad McCarthy, G, Fr. (RS); Anon Miller, NT, Fr. (RS); Joe O'Neill, ILB, Fr. (RS); T.J. Upshaw, G, Fr. (RS).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Cates (220 att., 866 yds., 7 TD); **Passing:** Niemet (135 att., 62 comp., 8 INT, 4 TD, 733 yds.); **Receiving:** Starks (32 rec., 433 yds., 3 TD); **Tackles:** O'Neill (134); **Sacks:** Three tied with 2.

Site: Bowling Green, Ohio. **Stadium:** Doyt Perry (30,599).

Last league title won: 1992.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—at Alabama	Oct. 19—Ball State
Sept. 14—Temple	Oct. 26—at Ohio
Sept. 21—at Miami (Ohio)	Nov. 2—at Akron
Sept. 28—Central Michigan	Nov. 9—Western Michigan
Oct. 5—at Toledo	Nov. 16—at Central Florida
Oct. 12—Kent	

6. WESTERN MICHIGAN

Offensive strengths: All-MAC first-team pick Tony Knox is the leader of an experienced receiving corps. Joe Lewandowski is one of the MAC's best tackles.

Offensive weaknesses: Quarterback Jay McDonagh, three-time team MVP, is gone. Replacement candidates Tim Lester, a redshirt freshman, and John Holba, a transfer from Ohio, have no experience. Bruno Heppell will try to replace Jim Vackaro, who gained a school-record 4,446 all-purpose yards during his career. Heppell will work behind a line that features three new starters.

Defensive strengths: Tackle Chris Rawson and outside linebacker Rick Lucas combined for 15 tackles for loss last year and both earned All-MAC second-team honors. Cornerback Heron O'Neal has active hands, evidenced by his nine passes broken up in 1995.

Defensive weaknesses: Sophomore tackle Dan Falcon has to pick up the slack created by the loss of three-time All-MAC pick Dion Powell. Inexperienced players make the secondary questionable.

Special teams: The Broncos ranked last

in the conference in net punting and punt returns. Three players are vying to replace three-year kicker Kevin Knope. Incumbent punter Zak Kemp may lose his job to JC transfer Robert Ralston. Knox is a decent kickoff returner.

Key to success: Finding replacements for McDonagh and Vackaro, and developing depth and remaining healthy in the offensive line, secondary and backfield.

Outlook: Western must replace 13 starters, so a rebuilding challenge looms. That means the Broncos, who have six consecutive winning seasons, can only hope to play the role of spoiler. But the future looks bright, thanks to consecutive strong recruiting classes.

BRONCOS DATA

Coach: Al Molde (60-38-2, 9 years; 158-91-8 overall, 25 years).

1995 record: 7-4, MAC: 6-2/T3rd.

Key losses: Rich Kaiser, DE; Kevin Knope, K; Jay McDonagh, QB; Tristan Moss, CB; Dean Polce, OLB; Dion Powell, DT; Jeff Quintana, G; Marvin Reynolds, S; Matt Riordan, G; Eric Sain, FB; Alex Schultz, LB; Joe Sheridan, OT; Jim Vackaro, TB; Andre Vaughn, LB.

Starters returning: **Offense (5):** Jim Holland, TE, 6-5/243, Sr.; Pat Kennedy, C, 6-4/260, Sr.; Tony Knox, WR, 5-9/170, Sr.; Joe Lewandowski, T, 6-2/285, Jr.; Ryan Sylvestre, WR, 6-0/177, Sr. **Defense (4):** Pat Jackson, E, 6-3/270, Sr.; Rick Lucas, OLB, 6-2/210, Jr.; Heron O'Neal, CB, 6-1/182, Jr.; Chris Rawson, T, 6-4/246, Sr. **Kickers (1):** Zak Kemp, P, 5-10/167, Jr.

Other key returnees: Eric Boersma, DE, Sr.; Andy Brasosky, S, Sr.; Jason Cavanaugh, OT, Soph.; John Coleman, FB, Sr.; Dan Falcon, DT, Soph.; Montes Gords, WR, Sr.; Todd Hanley, ILB, Sr.; Bruno Heppell, TB, Sr.; Steve Maloney, OLB, Jr.; Tarrence McEvans, CB, Jr.; Jon Pryor, OLB, Sr.; Steve Roon, ILB, Jr.; Philip VanHooks, G, Sr.

Top newcomers: Brian Gatch, ILB, Fr. (RS); Robert Hatch, RB, Fr. (RS); John Holba, QB, Soph. (transfer/Ohio); Tim Lester, QB, Fr. (RS); Jake Moreland, TE, Fr. (RS); Scott Niles, LB, Fr. (RS); Robert Ralston, P, Jr. (JC); Derrick Royal, WR, Fr.; Wes Searer, WR, Fr. (RS).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Heppell (133 att., 699 yds., 7 TD); **Passing:** None; **Receiving:** Knox (43 rec., 430 yds., 3 TD); **Tackles:** O'Neal (50); **Sacks:** Pryor (4).

Site: Kalamazoo, Mich. **Stadium:** Waldo (30,200).

Last league title won: 1988.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 29—Eastern Illinois	Oct. 12—at Wyoming
Sept. 7—at West Virginia	Oct. 26—at Toledo
Sept. 14—Eastern Michigan	Nov. 2—Ohio
Sept. 21—at Central Michigan	Nov. 9—at Bowling Green
Sept. 28—at Akron	Nov. 16—Kent
Oct. 5—Ball State	

7. CENTRAL MICHIGAN

Offensive strengths: Chad Darnell had a good debut season as a starting quarterback, but he'll need to increase his yardage and touchdown totals if the Chippewas hope to improve. Tiny tailback Silas Massey earned MAC Freshman of the Year honors after rushing for 1,089 yards. Three returning starters on the line, including massive tackle Scott Rehberg, will make Massey's life easier.

Offensive weaknesses: Who's going to catch Darnell's passes? Central Michigan can forget about improving if it continues to commit turnovers.

Defensive strengths: Three starters return in the secondary, including all-star free safety Quincy Wright, and all four starting linebackers return, headlined by Cory Gildersleeve and Charlie Bush.

Defensive weaknesses: The Chippewas' pass-rushing efforts are hampered by an inexperienced line. With little pressure, don't expect Central Michigan to net many

interceptions.

Special teams: The kicking game will be shaky. Ben Kroft will get the first opportunity to punt, while Adam Williams and Casey Wilson will vie for kicking duties. Reggie Allen and Massey are threatening kickoff-return men.

Keys to success: It's imperative that last season's rookie starters mature and play with savvy. The kicking game must develop, or Central Michigan can forget about winning many close games.

Outlook: The Chippewas, coming off their worst season since 1962, return 16 starters, but the talent level isn't exceptionally high. That doesn't bode well in a conference that should be strong.

CHIPPEWAS DATA

Coach: Dick Flynn (13-10, 2 years).

1995 record: 4-7, MAC: 2-6/T7th.

Key losses: Brad Blasy, K; Bryan Carpenter, G; Grant Elmquist, WR; Chad Frazier, FB; Brock Gutierrez, C; Alex Kemp, P; Chad Murphy, SS; Mitch Panchula, DT.

Starters returning: **Offense (7):** Chad Darnell, QB, 6-0/190, Sr.; Rolie Ferris, G, 6-3/290, Jr.; Gary Glowacki, T, 6-4/290, Jr.; Silas Massey, TB, 5-8/175, Soph.; Scott Rehberg, T, 6-8/320, Sr.; Bryan Schorman, SE, 6-1/190, Soph.; Adam Simonson, TE, 6-5/230, Soph. **Defense (9):** Travis Allen, T, 6-4/260, Jr.; Charlie Bush, ILB, 6-2/225, Jr.; Cory Gildersleeve, ILB, 6-2/235, Sr.; Bubba Hester, OLB, 6-1/230, Sr.; Jason Husband, CB, 6-0/175, Jr.; Calvin Massenberg, NT, 6-0/270, Soph.; Greg Spranger, OLB, 6-2/230, Sr.; Shawn Williams, CB, 5-9/175, Soph.; Quincy Wright, FS, 6-1/190, Sr. **Kickers:** None.

Other key returnees: Reggie Allen, WR, Soph.; Jeff Angeli, FB, Soph.; Steve Kelly, TE, Sr.; Jim Kozlowski, C, Sr.; Ben Kroft, P, Jr.; Jon McCall, DT, Soph.; Gene Miller, G, Soph.; Daryl Montie, SS, Jr.; C.J. Remmo, DT, Soph.; Damon Tolbert, TB, Sr.; Adam Williams, K, Jr.; Casey Wilson, K, Jr.

Top newcomers: Joe Adam, NT, Fr. (RS); Jason Koster, G, Fr. (RS); Gabe McMasters, OLB, Fr. (RS); Eric Page, OT, Fr. (RS); Pete Shepherd, QB, Fr.; Jerry Stempfen, DT, Fr. (RS); Jerome Winston, SS, Fr. (RS).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Massey (225 att., 1,089 yds., 8 TD); **Passing:** Darnell (258 att., 130 comp., 12 INT, 10 TD, 1,724 yds.); **Receiving:** Schorman (38 rec., 604



Free safety Quincy Wright heads a group of three returning starters in the Chippewas' secondary.

yds., 3 TD); **Tackles:** Gildersleeve (127); **Sacks:** Hester (4). **Site:** Mount Pleasant, Mich. **Stadium:** Kelly/Shorts (20,086). **Last league title won:** 1994.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—at Boise State	Oct. 12—Akron
Sept. 7—at Virginia	Oct. 19—Eastern Michigan
Sept. 14—Louisiana Tech	Oct. 26—Ball State
Sept. 21—Western Michigan	Nov. 2—at Kent
Sept. 28—at Bowling Green	Nov. 9—at Toledo
Oct. 5—at Miami (Ohio)	

8. AKRON

Offensive strengths: Akron probably will be changing quarterbacks again, but that isn't necessarily bad. Redshirt freshman Willie Spencer impressed coaches in spring practice. His athletic ability is similar to former Zips quarterback Marcel Weems. Tailback Yasin Reeder, a transfer from Pacific, should help the running game.

Offensive weaknesses: The line, which wasn't very physical last year and got pushed around by most teams, is a big concern despite the return of all five starters.

Defensive strengths: Ten starters are back, but it's unknown if that's good because the unit allowed a MAC-worst 38.9 points and 251.9 rushing yards a game. The secondary, led by cornerback Jonathan Eaton, is the defense's best unit. Linebacker Jason Taylor is worth watching.

Defensive weaknesses: It begins at the point of attack. The Zips' line gets pushed around, which makes for a lot of long afternoons. Also, Akron is plagued by too much inexperience.

Special teams: A new kicker must be found, along with a replacement for standout return man Lew Lawhorn. But punter Lloyd Kessler, who averaged 37.8 yards per punt, is back.

Key to success: How much progress the linemen make in the weight room during the offseason. Coaches think the linemen are getting stronger, but the transformation likely will take more than one offseason.

Outlook: As the cliché says, games are won in the trenches, where Akron is overmatched. Complicating matters is a brutal schedule that includes Virginia Tech and Illinois. That means it'll be a long season—again.

ZIPS DATA

Coach: Lee Owens (2-9, 1 year).

1995 record: 2-9, MAC: 2-6/T7th.

Key losses: Chris Counahan, DE; Tommy Dunn, TB; Josef Jakab, K; Matt Kaulig, QB; Lew Lawhorn, WR.

Starters returning: **Offense (9):** Terrell Dixon, TB, 5-10/195, Jr.; Brian Gabriesheski, T, 6-4/260, Sr.; Bill Hildebrand, C, 6-5/310, Soph.; Andy Kittle, G, 6-4/265, Sr.; Kevin Kuntz, G, 6-4/245, Soph.; Bill Putney, TE, 6-3/240, Soph.; Jamie Reader, FB, 6-2/230, Jr.; Rick Scheiderer, T, 6-4/300, Soph.; Matt Thiry, WR, 5-10/182, Sr. **Defense (10):** Eric Anderson, E, 6-4/230, Jr.; Jamey Bennett, T, 6-1/260, Soph.; Bryan Coles, CB, 6-2/175, Soph.; Jonathan Eaton, CB, 6-2/185, Soph.; George Germany, SS, 5-11/181, Soph.; John Harpring, FS, 6-2/210, Sr.; Ahmad Peterson, LB, 6-0/200, Soph.; Patrick Powell, LB, 6-1/230, Jr.; Joe Rumolo, T, 6-5/285, Sr.; Jason Taylor, LB, 6-5/230, Sr. **Kickers (1):** Lloyd Kessler, P, 6-0/220, Jr.

Other key returnees: Mike Junko, QB, Sr.; Greg Lomax, TB, Soph.; Brian Magrell, QB, Jr.; Devon Scott, WR, Sr.; Mack Warren, DT, Sr.; Tanik West, DE, Sr.; Chad Zgonc, TE, Jr. **Top newcomers:** Bill Burke, LB, Fr. (RS); George Cameron, LB, Fr. (RS); Stephen Hale, OT, Fr. (RS); Nate Johnson, LB, Soph. (Prop 48); Julius Lancaster, SS, Fr. (RS); Greg Peugot, WR, Fr.; Yasin Reeder, TB, Sr. (transfer/Pacific); Willie Spencer, QB, Fr. (RS).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Dixon (143 att., 463 yds., 1 TD); **Passing:** Junko (148 att., 78 comp., 7 INT, 5 TD, 864 yds.); **Receiving:** Reader (20 rec., 125 yds., 2 TD); **Tackles:** Taylor (99); **Sacks:** Taylor (5).

Site: Akron, Ohio. **Stadium:** Rubber Bowl (35,202).

Last league title won: None.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 29—at Ohio	Oct. 12—at Central Michigan
Sept. 7—Virginia Tech	Oct. 19—Miami (Ohio)
Sept. 14—Toledo	Oct. 26—at Northern Illinois
Sept. 21—at Illinois	Nov. 2—Bowling Green
Sept. 28—Western Michigan	Nov. 9—at Eastern Michigan
Oct. 5—at Kent	

9. KENT

Offensive strengths: Tackle Steve Zahursky, a two-year starter with good strength who has increased his size, is one of four returning starters on the line. Tailback Astron Whatley has rushed for nearly 2,000 yards in his first two seasons and will get help from JC transfer Frankie Sinclair. Tight end O.J. Santiago can surprise defenses with his receiving ability.

Offensive weaknesses: The quarterbacking must improve over last season's effort, which featured 16 interceptions and just six touchdown passes. Besides Whatley's 978 yards rushing, the other Flashes produced just 191 yards. Kent needs a fullback.

Defensive strengths: Linebacker Justin Sanford ranked second in the MAC in tackles last season and has the ability to force fumbles. Tackle Shawn Thompson, linebacker Roger Terry and free safety Joe Karr give the Golden Flashes hope.

Defensive weaknesses: Kent must find three new line starters, but that may not be bad. Last year, Kent ranked next-to-last in the MAC in rushing yards allowed (2,547).

Special teams: They're not good. Roger Forgatsch rarely bailed out the defense in '95 by ranking ninth in the MAC with a 36.2-yard punting average. Kicker Joseph Romano made just 7-of-14 field-goal attempts in 1995, including 4-of-11 from 30 yards and out.

Key to success: It starts with recruiting, where Kent has failed in the past. But there's hope this year in freshman quarterback Jose Davis and JC transfers Ron "Bam Bam" White on the offensive line and Sinclair.

Outlook: It looks like more of the same for the Golden Flashes, who are 8-68-1 in the past seven seasons.

GOLDEN FLASHES DATA

Coach: Jim Corrigan (3-18-1, 2 years).

1995 record: 1-9-1. MAC: 0-7-1/10th.

Key losses: Mike Barry, DE; Steve DeLucia, G; Brian Miller, ILB; Chris Morgan, FB; Steve Szymanowski, DE; Gerald Washington, DT.

Starters returning: **Offense (9):** Todd Goebbel, QB, 6-3/200, Soph.; Bob Hallen, C, 6-4/240, Jr.; Lance Hansen, WR, 5-10/174, Sr.; Doug Morgan, T, 6-4/270, Sr.; O.J. Santiago, TE, 6-7/239, Sr.; Kintroy Walker, WR, 5-8/174, Sr.; Donny White, G, 6-4/261, Sr.; Astron Whatley, TB, 5-8/177, Jr.; Steve Zahursky, T, 6-5/245, Jr. **Defense (6):** Tony Britt, CB, 5-10/162, Sr.; Brad Hartman, E, 6-4/255, Soph.; Joe Karr, FS, 5-10/180, Sr.; Al Phillips, SS, 5-9/183, Soph.; Justin Sanford, OLB, 5-11/179, Jr.; Shawn Thompson, T, 6-0/280, Jr. **Kickers (2):** Roger Forgatsch, P, 6-0/250, Sr.; Joseph Romano, K, 5-9/180, Sr.

Other key returnees: Tyrell Clinton, DE, Sr.; Chris Cogan, LB, Soph.; Quincy Falker, LB, Soph.; Kevin Haynes, CB, Soph.; Marc O'Brien, QB, Sr.; Eric Pierre-Louis, DB, Soph.; Courtney Short, DE, Jr.; Roger Terry, LB, Jr. (RS/shoulder).

Top newcomers: Jose Davis, QB, Fr.; Roger Powell, FB, Fr. (RS); Frankie Sinclair, TB, Jr. (JC); Jason White, QB, Fr. (RS); Ron White, OL, Jr. (JC).

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Whatley (231 att., 978 yds., 5 TD); Passing: Goebbel (164 att., 75 comp., 11



Tailback Astron Whatley, who ran for 978 yards last season, is one of the few bright spots for Kent.

INT, 3 TD, 792 yds.); Receiving: Walker (28 rec., 328 yds., 2 TD); Tackles: Sanford (136); Sacks: Sanford (3).
Site: Kent, Ohio. Stadium: Dix (30,520).
Last league title won: 1972.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—at Miami (Ohio)	Oct. 19—Ohio
Sept. 7—at Pittsburgh	Oct. 26—at Eastern Michigan
Sept. 14—Youngstown State	Nov. 2—Central Michigan
Sept. 28—at Nevada	Nov. 9—at Ball State
Oct. 5—Akron	Nov. 16—at Western Michigan
Oct. 12—at Bowling Green	

10. OHIO

Offensive strengths: Quarterback Kareem Wilson, one of the top freshmen in the conference last year, led Ohio in rushing, passing and scoring. But his status is clouded by academic problems. Fullback Steve Hookfin has increased his strength.

Offensive weaknesses: The Bobcats' main running threats are likely to be freshmen. All five starting linemen return, but they need to improve if the Bobcats hope to have an effective triple-option.

Defensive strengths: The team's two sack leaders, outside linebackers Andre Jackson and Charles Owens, have good skills. Brandon Cade and Mark Stubbs are good cover cornerbacks, and free safety Justin Anderson is a tackling machine.

Defensive weaknesses: Ohio must replace its top three tacklers. The line was shabby last year, which means all jobs are open, although hopes are high for Air Force transfer Bobby Holloway, a tackle.

Special teams: Jon Beier, who averaged 40 yards per boot in 1995, is battling Greg Krauss for the punting job. Krauss also is a top contender for kicking duties. Hank Ray might be the best kick returner in the MAC.

Key to success: Ohio, which has just 10 victories this decade, seems to enter every season with freshmen and sophomores dominating its two-deep roster. It has to find a way to gain stability and de-

velop experience.

Outlook: Ohio returns 17 starters, but it is experimenting at many spots to find the right pairings. Combine that with a tough schedule that includes eight road games, and it will be tough year for the coach Jim Grobe and the Bobcats.

BOBCATS DATA

Coach: Jim Grobe (2-8-1, 1 year).

1995 record: 2-8-1. MAC: 1-6-1/9th.

Key losses: Rich Antonaros, OT; Burt Brooks, NG; Paul Hamilton, P; Damiso Johnson, SS; Benny King, ILB; Kevin Martells, RB; Shawn Smith, WR; Jabaar Thompson, ILB.

Starters returning: **Offense (8):** Jason Caudill, G, 6-4/280, Jr.; Steve Hookfin, FB, 6-1/195, Soph.; J.D. Hupp, T, 6-2/245, Soph.; Hank Ray, RB/KR, 5-11/175, Sr.; Aaron Shreffler, C, 6-4/255, Sr.; Mike Solominsky, G, 6-2/240, Soph.; Lonche Thrash, SE, 6-2/185, Jr.; Kareem Wilson, QB, 5-7/185, Soph. **Defense (8):** Justin Anderson, FS, 6-2/195, Sr.; Brandon Cade, CB, 5-11/175, Jr.; Tom Carder, ILB, 6-1/215, Soph.; Andre Jackson, OLB, 5-11/205, Jr.; Charles Owens, OLB, 6-2/220, Sr.; Ron Reider, T, 6-3/275, Sr.; Mark Stubbs, CB, 5-10/175, Soph.; Geno Walsh, NG, 6-2/240, Soph. **Kickers (1):** Jon Beier, P, 5-11/180, Jr.

Other key returnees: Mario Daniel, DT, Sr. (RS/injury); Lonnie Fields, FS, Sr.; Dennis Fitzgerald, CB, Soph.; Sid Hall, ILB, Jr.; Karim Hill, RB, Soph.; Brian Huston, K, Soph.; Tevell Jones, DB, Jr. (RS/academics); Nick Magistrale, OLB, Jr.; Damion Maxwell, WR, Soph.; Ewane Nanji, RB, Soph.; Rahim Slaise, OLB, Soph.; Nick Toth, RB, Soph.; Lakarlos Townsend, RB, Sr. (RS/injury).

Top newcomers: B.J. Franklin, QB/WR, Jr. (transfer/Wake Forest); Bobby Holloway, DT, Sr. (transfer/Air Force); Greg Krauss, K, Fr.; David Murphy, QB, Fr.; Tavares Rankin, WR, Fr. **Returning statistical leaders:** Rushing: Wilson (249 att., 893 yds., 10 TD); Passing: Wilson (130 att., 48 comp., 0 INT, 3 TD, 657 yds.); Receiving: Thrash (7 rec., 114 yds., 0 TD); Tackles: Anderson (106); Sacks: Jackson, Owens (6).
Site: Athens, Ohio. Stadium: Peden (20,000).
Last league title won: 1968.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 29—Akron	Oct. 19—at Kent
Sept. 7—at Hawaii	Oct. 26—Bowling Green
Sept. 14—at Army	Nov. 2—at Western Michigan
Sept. 21—at Northwestern	Nov. 9—at Miami (Ohio)
Oct. 5—Eastern Michigan	Nov. 16—at East Carolina
Oct. 12—at Ball State	Nov. 23—Toledo

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SCOUTING THE MAC

Ascending: Miami. After winning the MAC title in 1986, the Redskins averaged 3.8 conference victories from 1987-94. Miami surged to a six-win, second-place finish in 1995 and is favored to claim the title this season.

Descending: Bowling Green. It was the bully of the MAC from 1991-94, when it won two titles and finished second and third the other two seasons. But the Falcons tumbled to sixth last season and face another middle-of-the-pack finish.

Nightmare schedule: Akron. In consecutive weeks in September, the Zips host Big East champ Virginia Tech and MAC title contender Toledo, travel to Illinois and return home to play Western Michigan, which it has lost to six consecutive times.

Dream schedule: Eastern Michigan. The Eagles play the top three MAC contenders (Toledo, Miami and Ball State) at home and close the season with four of five games at home, where they went 3-1 last season.

Best matchup of the year: Miami at Toledo, November 2. Last season, a wild finish produced a 28-28 tie. This year's game likely will have a great impact on who wins the conference title.

Worst matchup of the year: Ohio at Kent, October 19. In two of the past three years, Kent hasn't won a MAC game. Ohio has one conference victory in the past two years. Anybody want a ticket?

Bowl bound: Miami should play a December game for the first time since a 1986 trip to the California Bowl.

Biggest shoes to fill: Miami TB Deland McCullough's. He finished his career as the MAC's leading career rusher with 4,368 yards. He set Miami's single-season rushing record with 1,627 yards in 1995, when he became the first player in school history to lead the team in rushing four years in a row. Senior Ty King, who has 779 career yards, is the heir apparent.

Most overrated player: All kickers, who as a group last season were some of the most ordinary the MAC has seen in years. The league's best kicker made 14 field goals and five in the top 10 made nine or fewer.

Most underrated player: Toledo ILB Jamie Johnson. During the Rockets' championship season in 1995, he led them in tackles with almost 12 per game, yet didn't even receive honorable mention status on the all-conference team.

Best coach: Eastern Michigan's Rick Rasnick. You have to marvel at the job Rasnick did last season. Hired in January 1995, he took over a team that didn't have a winning record in the previous five seasons. He proceeded to guide the Eagles to a 6-5 mark as the team smashed 43 school records.

Best staff: Central Michigan's assistants must be doing something right to hang around so long. Denny LaFleur is in his 21st season with the Chippewas, Jim Schulte his 20th, Plas Presnell his 14th and Tom Kearly his 12th.

Coach on the hot seat: Central Michigan's

HONOR ROLL

Best offensive backfield: Toledo.
Best wide receivers: Western Michigan.
Best offensive line: Miami.
Best defensive line: Western Michigan.
Best linebackers: Miami.
Best secondary: Miami.
Best special teams: Ball State.
Hardest hitter: Cory Gilliard, SS, Ball State.
Best backup quarterback: Matt Knisely, Ball State.
Best pro prospect: Brad Maynard, P, Ball State.
Best game-day atmosphere: Toledo.

RANKING THE RECRUITING

Top recruit in parentheses

1. Toledo (WR Nate Jackson). Toledo had a crucial recruiting weekend coincide with its departure for the Las Vegas Bowl last December, when recruits got a chance to feel the excitement in the program.
2. Miami (DL Corey Estell).
3. Bowling Green (LB Chris Della Vella).
4. Ohio (QB David Murphy).
5. Central Michigan (QB Pete Shepherd).
6. Ball State (RB Kevin Cartwright).
7. Western Michigan (WR Derrick Royal).
8. Kent (QB Jose Davis).
9. Eastern Michigan (RB Idris Wells).
10. Akron (WR Greg Peugot).

Dick Flynn. Flynn won the MAC title in his first year in 1994, then slipped to 2-6 in the conference last year. The Chippewas aren't used to losing, so another subpar season will make 1994 a distant memory.

Best bets: Akron, Kent and Ohio will finish in places eight through 10. ... Talented running backs are in abundance, as Toledo's Wasean Tait, Ball State's Michael Blair and LeAndre Moore, Kent's Astron Whatley, Central Michigan's Silas Massey and Bowling Green's Courtney Davis possess first-team all-conference ability. ... MAC teams play seven games against Big Ten teams, but they'll be hard-pressed to win any of them. But if it happens, the most likely winner will be either Miami or Toledo over Indiana.

Odds and ends: Miami quarterback Sam Ricketts is 8-1-1 as a starter. ... Toledo rewarded Gary Pinkel for leading the Rockets to the 1995 title and Las Vegas Bowl victory with a four-year contract extension in March. The contract runs through 2000 and includes a base salary of \$90,000. Additional radio and television money of around \$25,000 makes Pinkel the highest-compensated coach in the MAC. ... When Indiana visits Toledo on September 7, it will mark the first time a Big Ten school has played at a MAC school. ... Ball State All-American punter Brad Maynard has a 43.7 career average on 183 punts. The NCAA record for players with 200 or more punts is 44.7 by Ray Guy of Southern Mississippi. ... The MAC will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 1996. ... Next season, the MAC will add Northern Illinois and Division I-AA

PREDICTIONS

ALL-MAC TEAM

OFFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
WR	TONY KNOX, Western Michigan	5-9/170	Sr.
WR	TREMAYNE BANKS, Miami	5-10/180	Sr.
TE	O.J. SANTIAGO, Kent	6-7/239	Sr.
T	SCOTT REHBERG, C. Michigan	6-8/320	Sr.
T	JOE LEWANDOWSKI, W. Michigan	6-2/285	Jr.
G	TONY ROUSH, Ball State	6-3/305	Sr.
G	MIKE BIRD, Miami	6-2/295	Jr.
C	MATT CRAVENS, Miami	6-4/275	Sr.
QB	CHARLIE BATCH, E. Michigan	6-2/210	Sr.
RB	WASEAN TAIT, Toledo	5-8/175	Sr.
RB	MICHAEL BLAIR, Ball State	6-0/240	Sr.

DEFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
E	JASON HOLMES, Miami	6-3/251	Sr.
T	CHRIS RAWSON, W. Michigan	6-4/246	Sr.
E	PAT JACKSON, Western Michigan	6-3/270	Sr.
LB	DEE OSBORNE, Miami	6-2/215	Sr.
LB	CRAIG DUES, Toledo	6-0/185	Sr.
LB	KEVIN O'NEILL, Bowling Green	6-1/230	Jr.
LB	KENYON HARPER, Miami	6-3/225	Sr.
CB	JAMIE TAYLOR, Miami	5-9/170	Jr.
CB	RODNEY NUBIN, Eastern Michigan	6-0/195	Sr.
S	CORY GILLIARD, Ball State	6-1/204	Sr.
S	QUINCY WRIGHT, C. Michigan	6-1/190	Sr.

SPECIALISTS

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
K	JUSTIN VENTURA, E. Michigan	5-8/184	Soph.
P	BRAD MAYNARD, Ball State	6-1/175	Sr.
KR	HANK RAY, Ohio University	5-11/175	Sr.

PLAYERS OF THE YEAR



OFFENSE:

CHARLIE BATCH
QB, E. Michigan



DEFENSE:

DEE OSBORNE
OLB, Miami

TOP NEWCOMERS:

OFFENSIVE: Jose Davis, QB, Kent
DEFENSIVE: Bobby Holloway, T, Ohio

Marshall. Division I-AA Buffalo will join in either 1998 or '99. ... Bowling Green's 41-14-2 (.737) record since 1991 is the 13th-best mark in the nation in that span.

—DOUG ZALESKI

1. UTAH STATE

Offensive strengths: The Aggies received a gift from the NCAA when running back Abu Wilson was awarded an extra year (his sixth) of eligibility. He is the key to this offense, and if Utah State is to win the conference, Wilson will be the reason. The Aggies also signed a group of receivers that should elevate what has been a struggling passing game.

Offensive weaknesses: The quarterback position is far from settled and it could keep the Aggies from realizing their potential. Talent certainly exists on the line, but it's a matter of finding the right combination. Eighteen linemen made it into games last year.

Defensive strengths: With Danilo Robinson at end and David Gill at linebacker, no school in the league can match the Aggies' front seven. Utah State also has the best secondary in the Big West, a league not noted for having great ones.

Defensive weaknesses: Even with Robinson, the line could use more help. So could Gill at linebacker. More defenders must be found to combat the wide-open offenses the Aggies will face.

Special teams: The Aggies have the conference's best kicker (Micah Knorr), best punter (Nathan Morreale) and best kick returner (Jason Bandy).

Key to success: Utah State has the talent to win the league if it can fill the holes on defense and find a dependable quarterback. The conference schedule is favorable, with the toughest games (Nevada and Idaho) at home; in fact, for only the fourth time in its 104-year football history, Utah State has as many as six home games.

Outlook: Unlike last season, when Nevada was the clear favorite, the conference race is wide open. One slip-up by Utah State could open the door for either Nevada or Idaho. But the conditions appear right for USU to win its second league title in four years.

AGGIES DATA

Coach: John L. Smith (4-7, 1 year; 57-28 overall, 7 years).

1995 record: 4-7, Big West: 4-2/T2nd.

Key losses: Kevin Alexander, WR; Kenyatta Green, LB; Shawn Griswold, TE; Travis Guiney, C; Jalonn Harrison, WR; Matt Hauk, DT; Robert Holmes, G; Novich Hunter, OT; Markell McCain, OLB; Ivy Russell, WR.

Starters returning: Offense (4): Brandon Dyson, T, 6-3/286, Jr.; Troy Kema, G, 6-3/287, Sr.; Patrick Mullins, QB, 6-4/211, Sr.; Abu Wilson, RB, 6-1/207, Sr. **Defense (8):** Sean Coleman, SS, 5-9/191, Sr.; Ben Crosland, E, 6-5/259, Jr.; Walter Fiefla, T, 6-0/272, Jr.; David Gill, LB, 6-0/230, Sr.; Mike Hudson, CB, 6-0/194, Sr.; Craig Miller, CB, 5-10/187, Soph.; Danilo Robinson, E, 6-1/250, Sr.; Spencer Waggoner, OLB (moved from SS), 5-11/196, Sr. **Kickers (2):** Micah Knorr, K, 6-1/179, Sr.; Nathan Morreale, P, 5-11/190, Sr.

Other key returnees: Jason Bandy, WR/KR, Sr.; Melvin Blue, RB, Soph.; Johndale Carty, FS, Soph.; Eddie Davis, LB, Sr.; Derek DeCesare, LB, Soph.; Vaea Fiefla, DE, Soph.; Aaron Frazier, WR, Sr.; Tai Gordon, CB, Sr.; Chad Lyman, DL, Jr.; London McBride, TE, Soph.; Gregory Stenson, DE, Sr.; Shawn Turner, WR, Sr.; Ken Watts, OT, Soph.

Top newcomers: Jordan Bauerle, G, Soph. (Prop 48); Demario Brown, RB, Soph. (Prop 48); Nakia Jenkins, WR, Jr. (JC); Adam Jones, DL, Jr. (JC); Mauricio Jordan, OT, Jr. (JC/RS); Matt Lance, C, Fr. (RS); John Latu, DT, Jr. (JC); Mike Lindsay, G, Fr. (RS); Mark Rommel, OL, Jr. (JC); Steve Smith, WR, Jr. (JC); Thaddeus Variance, RB, Jr. (JC).

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Wilson (275 att., 1,476 yds., 15 TD); **Passing:** Mullins (383 att., 209 comp., 16 INT, 12 TD, 2,774 yds.); **Receiving:** Wilson (38 rec., 375 yds., 0 TD); **Tackles:** Gill (168); **Sacks:** Robinson (10.5).

Site: Logan, Utah. **Stadium:** Romney (30,257).

Last league title won: 1993 (tie).

BIG WEST

Conference Rank: 10
By MARK ANDERSON

PREDICTIONS

1. UTAH STATE
2. NEVADA
3. IDAHO
4. BOISE STATE
5. NEW MEXICO STATE
6. NORTH TEXAS



Aggies linebacker David Gill was a terror to opponents last year, finishing with 168 tackles.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—Utah	Oct. 12—at New Mexico St.
Sept. 7—Cal State-Northridge	Oct. 19—at Boise State
Sept. 14—at Southern Miss	Oct. 26—Idaho
Sept. 21—at Oklahoma State	Nov. 2—North Texas
Sept. 28—at Texas Tech	Nov. 9—Nevada
Oct. 4—Brigham Young	

2. NEVADA

Offensive strengths: Offense always is a strength. Eric Bennett and Texas transfer John Dutton will compete for the quarterback job, and both are more than promising. Another excellent receiving corps is on hand to catch their passes. A broken foot late last year ended what could have been an outstanding season for running back Ernie Wilson.

Offensive weaknesses: Three of the five

starting linemen graduated and a fourth quit in the offseason. The Wolf Pack will be hard-pressed to make up for the loss of quarterback Mike Maxwell (33 touchdown passes) and receiver Alex Van Dyke (129 receptions), even with all the talented newcomers.

Defensive strengths: The good news is that Nevada could have the Big West's best defense. The bad news is no one is quite sure what that means. Everyone knows what kind of player linebacker DeShone Myles is, though. He showed his greatness in the Las Vegas Bowl, when he came back quickly from appendicitis to dominate the game. Nevada is solid at linebacker and experienced in the secondary.

Defensive weaknesses: The defense made an offense that averaged 44 points per game sweat a lot last season. In spring practice, the defense showed promise, but many questions remain on the line and in the secondary.

Special teams: Walk-on kicker Damon Shea was a nice surprise last season, when he converted 61-of-63 extra-point attempts and 9-of-11 field-goal attempts. Jason McLean was an adequate punter. Van Dyke will be missed on kick returns.

Key to success: The defense has to improve for Nevada to succeed. The defense doesn't even have to be great; mediocre probably would be enough. If it does improve enough, Nevada could be back in the Las Vegas Bowl.

Outlook: Nevada isn't expected to have the same type of team as last season, when it was clearly the class of the Big West. It won't even have the same coach after Chris Ault unexpectedly resigned in April. But it could be good enough to win again. The offense will win a lot of games by itself, even though Nevada should have a good defense by Big West standards.

WOLF PACK DATA

Coach: To be announced.

1995 record: 9-3 (lost to Toledo in Las Vegas Bowl). Big West: 6-0/1st.

Key losses: Bob Cooper, G; Brandon LaGrafie, G; Mike Maxwell, QB; Steve McHenry, TE; David Miller, DT; Kin Minor, RB; Lamonte Porter, LB; Mike Rockwood, OT; Deron Thorp, OT; Alex Van Dyke, WR; Cornel West, WR; Julian Yearwood, DE.

Starters returning: Offense (2): Jeff Hadwick, C, 6-4/250, Sr.; Diamond Wilkins, WR, 6-1/175, Sr. **Defense (8):** James Cannida, T, 6-2/270, Jr.; Mike Crawford, ILB, 6-2/240, Sr.; Mike Guider, CB, 6-0/185, Sr.; Tawan Hall, DE, 6-3/245, Sr.; Darrell Hasson, CB, 6-0/175, Sr.; James Johnson, FS, 6-0/180, Sr.; DeShone Myles, ILB, 6-3/225, Jr.; Garnett Overby, SS, 6-0/175, Sr. **Kickers (2):** Jason McLean, P, 6-1/210, Jr.; Damon Shea, K, 5-10/180, Soph.

Other key returnees: Eric Bennett, QB, Jr.; Mike Edwards, OT, Jr.; David Hairston, LB, Jr.; Matt Kelly, TE, Jr.; Josh Micklos, DE, Sr.; Geoff Noisy, WR, Soph.; Sean Simms, TE, Sr.; Donny West, G, Jr.; Ernie Wilson, RB, Sr.

Top newcomers: Jimmy Burk, LB, Jr. (JC); John Dutton, QB, Soph. (transfer/Texas); George Jones, DE, Jr. (JC); Chris Lemon, RB, Fr. (RS); Wesley Morris, WR, Jr. (JC); Dan Rockwell, LB, Fr.; Jason Sadler, OT, Jr. (transfer/Pacific); Nimoy Triplet, WR, Jr. (JC); Ken White, OT, Jr. (JC).

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Wilson (77 att., 390 yds., 5 TD); **Passing:** Bennett (99 att., 59 comp., 5 INT, 5 TD, 933 yds.); **Receiving:** Wilkins (51 rec., 754 yds., 6 TD); **Tackles:** Myles (133); **Sacks:** Myles (3).

Site: Reno, Nev. **Stadium:** Mackay (31,545).

Last league title won: 1995.

SCHEDULE

Sept. 7—at Oregon	Oct. 19—at Idaho
Sept. 14—Montana State	Oct. 26—at North Texas
Sept. 21—at California	Nov. 2—New Mexico State
Sept. 28—Kent	Nov. 9—at Utah State
Oct. 5—at UNLV	Nov. 16—Arkansas State
Oct. 12—Boise State	

3. IDAHO

Offensive strengths: The passing game could rival the one found at Nevada. UCLA transfer Ryan Fien fell into the Vandals' lap during the offseason; Fien started three games for the Bruins last season. He hasn't won the job yet, but he will. His best target could be Robert Scott, who is such an outstanding athlete he may become the team's second-string quarterback as well.

Offensive weaknesses: The linemen will spend much of the season introducing themselves to one another. They'll have to overcome their inexperience to keep pressure off Fien and to create holes for running back Joel Thomas.

Defensive strengths: Pass-rushing specialist Ryan Phillips likely will play some at outside linebacker to free him of the constant double-teams he faced last season. That freedom should allow him to continue to harass quarterbacks. Talent on the line helped make the move an easy decision.

Defensive weaknesses: Help is needed in the secondary, where some potentially talented newcomers could help. Another area that could use improvement is linebacker, where several players have departed.

Special teams: Justin Spiva, who averaged 40.3 yards a punt as a true freshman, also may handle the placement duties. The Vandals lost terrific kick returners in Dwight McKinzie and Montrell Williams.

Key to success: Idaho was known for its defense last season, and defense again could make the difference in the Vandals winning the conference title. But the passing game needs to live up to expectations.

Outlook: The Vandals should make a successful entry into the Big West Conference after exiting the Big Sky. They will benefit by being more defensive-minded than other Big West schools. The October 19 home game against Nevada could dictate how the rest of their season goes.



DeShone Myles headlines a Nevada defensive unit that, by Big West standards, should be effective.

VANDALS DATA

Coach: Chris Tormey (6-5, 1 year).

1995 record: 6-5 (including 0-1 in 1-AA playoffs). Big Sky: 4-3/2nd.

Key losses: Travis Coffey, FS; Spencer Folan, RT; Eric Hisaw, QB; Mike Hughes, RG; Eric Johnson, C; Lavoni Kidd, RB; Dave Longoria, LB; Dwight McKinzie, WR; Jim Mills, LT; Jason O'Neill, CB; Avery Slaughter, LB; Montrell Williams, SS; Ryan Wolverton, K.

Starters returning: **Offense (4):** Andy Gilroy, TE, 6-1/219, Sr.; David Griffin, WR, 5-6/173, Sr.; Robert Scott, WR, 6-1/201, Soph.; Richard Zenk, G, 6-5/266, Sr. **Defense (7):** Antoine Chambers, SS, 5-11/187, Sr.; Tommy James, CB, 5-11/196, Sr.; Barry Mitchell, E, 6-3/243, Sr.; Ryan Phillips, E (will move to LB), 6-3/243, Sr.; Jason Shelt, MLB, 6-0/230, Sr.; Ryan Smith, T, 6-4/254, Sr.; Tim Wilson, T, 6-0/243, Jr. **Kickers:** Justin Spiva, P, 5-9/190, Soph.

Other key returnees: Brian Brennan, QB, Jr.; Arnold Gunn, CB, Jr.; Robert Mulder, DE, Sr.; Ryan Smith, DT, Sr.; Crosby Tajan, OT, Jr.; Jerome Thomas, RB, Soph.; Joel Thomas, RB, Jr.; Bill Verdonk, C, Jr.; Yaphet Warren, CB, Soph.; Dan Zeamer, G, Sr.; Steven Zenk, OT, Sr.

Top newcomers: Jerome Allen, WR, Jr. (JC); Ryan Fien, QB, Sr. (transfer/UCLA); Bryson Garner, FS, Fr. (RS); Ryan McGinnis, CB, Jr. (transfer/Pacific); Ryan Meek, OT, Jr. (JC); Deon Price, WR, Jr. (transfer/Pacific); Antonio Wilson, WR, Jr. (JC); Matthew Yonan, G, Jr. (JC).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Joel Thomas (52 att., 177 yds., 5 TD); **Passing:** Brennan (96 att., 41 comp., 1 INT, 5 TD, 554 yds.); **Receiving:** Scott (29 rec., 477 yds., 6 TD); **Tackles:** Shelt (71); **Sacks:** Phillips (11).

Site: Moscow, Idaho. **Stadium:** Kibbie Dome (16,000).

Last league title won: None (first year in Division I-A).

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—at Wyoming	Oct. 26—at Utah State
Sept. 7—at San Diego State	Nov. 2—Eastern Washington
Sept. 14—St. Mary's (Cal.)	Nov. 9—New Mexico State
Sept. 28—at SW Texas State	Nov. 16—at North Texas
Oct. 5—Cal Poly SLO	Nov. 23—at Boise State
Oct. 19—Nevada	

4. BOISE STATE

Offensive strengths: Led by Ryan Ikebe, the wide receivers should be the strength of the offense. Ikebe was the Big Sky's most dynamic receiver last season, when he averaged 21.8 yards on 34 catches. Center Ted Butler was Aaron Graham's backup at Nebraska two years ago.

Offensive weaknesses: The quarterback position became a concern when Tony Hilde left the team before spring practice to concentrate on school and deal with the legal troubles he ran into last season. The possibility exists that he will return, but the Broncos aren't counting on it. If that's not bad enough, no one has stepped forward at running back. The line, with the exception of Butler, could struggle.

Defensive strengths: Linemen Sione Fifita and Chris Wing make Boise State tough to stop up front. Fifita and Wing need to be unstoppable because the rest of the defense is questionable.

Defensive weaknesses: Not only are eight starters gone, but four backup defensive backs won't return, either. Pacific transfer Marcel Yates, normally a safety, probably will be tried at cornerback.

Special teams: One day at practice before last season, the coaches asked if anyone had ever punted. Jeff Davis said he had, and he got the job. He wound up averaging 39.3 yards a punt as a true freshman. Kicker is a mystery position, with Greg Erickson and his highly accurate leg gone.

Key to success: If Hilde doesn't return, a new quarterback must be found—and quick. The most likely candidate is redshirt freshman Erik Davis. The linebackers and secondary must develop quickly.

THE PRESSURE'S ON

Aggies' Wilson wants to make sixth year his best

Abu Wilson might need a whistle. After all, the running back is entering his sixth year as part of the Utah State football program, and he seems more than just another Aggies player.

"Some of the guys tease me by saying I'm going to be Utah State's first player/coach," jokes Wilson, who was a redshirt freshman in 1991 and a medical redshirt (knee injury) in 1993.

Wilson takes his role seriously, offering instructions to young players on the things he was taught when he arrived on campus from Oakland so long ago. But he's hardly ready to let a younger running back take over as the Aggies' starter. Not after rushing for 1,476 yards and 15 touchdowns last season and with the Aggies favored to win the Big West title this season.



Wilson

There was no guarantee, though, that Wilson would be around to keep his job. "Our thinking was it was questionable we were going to get him (for a fourth season over six years), so I didn't know," Utah State coach John L. Smith says. "I thought it might've been 50-50. That was our figuring. We took a JC (junior college) running back for insurance if he didn't get the year back."

Smith had good reason to be concerned. The NCAA has a reputation for being tough when it comes to extending eligibility. Still, Wilson was firm in his resolve to return. In fact, he didn't return phone calls to those who wanted to discuss his future in pro football.

"Some people were making a big deal out of it," Wilson says. "I always thought I would be back anyway. It was more relief than jubilation."

Sure, there will be pressure on such a veteran to excel this fall. So far, though, Wilson has met all challenges. After sitting out his first season, he rushed for 795 yards in 1992. Then, after getting hurt in 1993, he rambled for 822 yards (5.2 per carry) in 1994. The breakthrough season came last year, when he averaged 134.2 yards per game.

"He's a lot better physically, a better blocker, and he does what you ask him to do," Smith says. "He has a chance ... to play on Sundays."

Right now, Wilson is just thankful for the opportunity to play on Saturdays. "Some people did a lot for me," Wilson says of his longer-than-anticipated stay in Logan, Utah, "and I want to give back."

—MARK ANDERSON

Outlook: The Broncos are just behind the three teams—Utah State, Nevada and Idaho—that will challenge for the Big West crown. Too many question marks on defense and too many holes on offense should prevent them from making any kind of real run this year.

BRONCOS DATA

Coach: Pokey Allen (23-14, 3 years).

1995 record: 7-4. Big Sky: 4-3/T2nd.

Key losses: Karlin Adams, HB; Martez Benas, OG; Paul Coffman, C; Greg Erickson, K; Tim Foley, SS; Rashid Gayle, CB; Del Graven, FB; Tony Hilde, QB (may return in the fall); DaWuan Miller, CB; Mike Richmond, WR; Brian Smith, LB; Travis Thompson, DT; Alex Toyos, G; Keith Walk-Green, FS; Vince Watson, LB; Matt Weston, DE; Bernie Zimmerman, TE. **Starters returning: Offense (3):** Jermaine Belin, T, 6-4/310, Soph.; Ryan Ikebe, WR, 5-10/185, Sr.; Jordan LePiane, T, 6-3/297, Sr. **Defense (3):** Sione Fifita, T, 6-1/285, Sr.; Jeremy Haener, LB, 6-0/236, Sr.; Chris Wing, E, 6-3/235, Sr. **Kickers (1):** Jeff Davis, P, 6-0/195, Soph.

Other key returnees: Jim Brekke, TE, Soph.; Ted Butler, C, Soph.; Jimmy Clark, LB, Sr.; Tommy Edwards, RB, Sr.; Ray Garcia, LB, Sr.; Andre Horace, WR, Sr.; Shane McKenna, DE, Soph.; Nat Meade, OT, Jr.

Top newcomers: Walter Cheeks, G, Jr. (JC); Erik Davis, QB, Fr. (RS); Reggie Ethridge, RB, Jr. (JC); Ryan Groneman, OL, Fr. (RS); Zack McSweeney, K, Soph. (transfer/Pacific); David Stachelski, TE, Fr. (RS); Brian Steger, LB, Jr. (JC); Richard Sweeney, LB, Jr. (JC); Marcel Yates, CB/S, Fr. (transfer/Pacific); Derek Zimmerman, DB, Fr. (RS).

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Edwards (97 att., 437 yds., 5 TD); Passing: Hilde (279 att., 154 comp., 5 INT, 18 TD, 2,386 yds.); Receiving: Ikebe (34 rec., 742 yds., 5 TD); Tackles: Wing (58); Sacks: Wing (6).

Site: Boise, Idaho. **Stadium:** Bronco (22,600).

Last league title won: None (first year in Division I-A).

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—Central Michigan	Oct. 12—at Nevada
Sept. 7—Portland State	Oct. 19—Utah State
Sept. 14—Eastern Washington	Nov. 2—at Fresno State
Sept. 21—at Hawaii	Nov. 9—North Texas
Sept. 28—NW Louisiana	Nov. 16—at N. Mexico St.
Oct. 5—at Arizona State	Nov. 23—Idaho

5. NEW MEXICO STATE

Offensive strengths: The coaches couldn't keep then-freshman Dervis Manns on the bench last season. He finally became a starter at running back midway through the season and rushed for 1,120 yards, with a 7.1 average. Manns has a good line to run behind, too.

Offensive weaknesses: The most glaring are the losses of quarterback Cody Ledbetter and wide receiver Lucious Davis, who formed one of the top passing combos in the league. Losing tight end Sean Manuel doesn't help, either. And the starting linemen must stay healthy, because there isn't much behind them.

Defensive strengths: Six starters return, and half of them play linebacker. But one of those linebackers, Enrique Ramirez, will play end to shore up a hole there. Two starters in the secondary also return.

Defensive weaknesses: More than half the defensive starters return, but is that good? New Mexico State ranked 102nd in the nation last season and gave up 478.6 yards a game. Losing a player like end Sam Manuel won't make life any better.

Special teams: The Aggies have to replace a couple of four-year starters in punter Chad Zeche and kicker Bubba Culin. One bright spot is Manns, who averaged 24.7 yards returning kickoffs.

Key to success: Manns will have to carry the offense unless something unexpected happens at quarterback. The returning starters on defense must increase their



UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO

Expect Idaho defensive end/linebacker Ryan Phillips to again rack up an impressive sack total.

level of play as well.

Outlook: The Aggies will be a non-factor in 1996. Although the receivers are supposed to have some talent, the passing game won't be nearly as good as it was last season. New Mexico State fans will have fun watching Manns run all over the field, but he'll be watched much more closely by the opposition as well.

AGGIES DATA

Coach: Jim Hess (21-45, 7 years; 113-98-5 overall, 22 years).

1995 record: 4-7. Big West: 3-3/T4th.

Key losses: Bubba Culin, K; Lucious Davis, WR; Heath Haedge, C; Adrian Lomas, DE; Cody Ledbetter, QB; Sam Manuel, DE; Sean Manuel, TE; Tony Sanchez, WR; Greg Snyder, OT; Nali Tuipulotu, DT; Donald Veasley, CB; Cedric Walton, FS; Chad Zeche, P.

Starters returning: Offense (4): Keelin Boulware, T, 6-4/285, Sr.; Jim Breckenridge, G, 6-4/280, Sr.; Duane Gregory, WR, 6-1/199, Sr.; Dervis Manns, RB, 5-9/186, Soph. **Defense (6):** Matt Botone, LB, 6-0/215, Sr.; Gary Jessie, LB, 6-0/232, Jr.; Jobe Lewis, SS, 6-2/180, Soph.; Andy Martinez, T, 6-1/280, Sr.; Enrique Ramirez, LB (will move to E), 6-1/236, Jr.; Dorian Williams, CB, 5-11/190, Sr. **Kickers:** None.

Other key returnees: Bill Beene, G, Sr.; Charles Birdwell, TE, Soph.; Mark Keith Blackshire, LB, Soph.; DuShane Briggs, DT, Jr.; Kado Felder, DE, Jr.; Mike Harvey, CB, Sr.; Erich Johnson, CB, Sr.; Carlos Lantigua, K, Soph.; Mickey Murray, RB, Sr. (RS/academics); Yannis Pappas, DE, Sr.; David Patterson, WR, Soph.; Roderic Payne, WR, Sr.; Chad Salisbury, QB, Soph. **Top newcomers:** Jason Berger, OT, Fr. (RS); Tye Fraembs, DT, Fr. (RS); Dustin Guinn, WR, Fr. (RS); Gregg Madsen, QB, Fr. (RS); Chad Martin, TE, Fr. (RS); Max Wade, LB, Soph. (transfer/Air Force).

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Manns (157 att., 1,120 yds., 7 TD); Passing: Salisbury (1 att., 1 comp., 0 INT, 0 TD, 39 yds.); Receiving: Gregory (50 rec., 844 yds., 6 TD); Tackles: Jessie (89); Sacks: Jessie (1).

Site: Las Cruces, N.M. **Stadium:** Aggie Memorial (30,343).

Last league title won: None.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 29—New Mexico	Oct. 19—at North Texas
Sept. 7—at Texas	Oct. 26—Southern Utah
Sept. 14—at Texas-El Paso	Nov. 2—at Nevada
Sept. 21—Cal State-Northridge	Nov. 9—at Idaho
Sept. 28—at Louisiana State	Nov. 16—Boise State
Oct. 12—Utah State	

6. NORTH TEXAS

Offensive strengths: Forget the skill positions. The talent rests on the line, even though there's a good chance all the starters will be new. Three starters may be

back, but the coaches are high on an entire group of linemen who redshirted, and two Pacific transfers join them. Brian Waters is the league's best tight end.

Offensive weaknesses: It's bad news when a team that likes to run a lot of three-receiver sets loses all three starting receivers. Quarterback Josh Gulley, who found himself starting in the sixth game as a true freshman, needs time to develop.

Defensive strengths: The top three linebackers return, including leading tackler Brett Renfro. Hope also lies with the secondary, which was repeatedly burned last season. Two defensive backs who were freshmen in 1995 return, and three JC transfers should get a good look.

Defensive weaknesses: Just about everywhere. Optimism abounds, but North Texas was not a good defensive team last season, and no one is ready to declare that the '96 edition will be any better.

Special teams: The Eagles have two kickers they can rely on and an excellent punter in Toby Gowin. They also expect their kick returners to be good even though the top two graduated.

Key to success: The defense has to perform up to the talent level the coaches believe it has. Improvement by Gulley would be nice, too.

Outlook: Maybe in 1997 North Texas will be competitive. But it won't happen this year. Continual improvement is the best the Eagles can hope for.

EAGLES DATA

Coach: Matt Simon (9-13-1, 2 years).

1995 record: 2-9 as an independent.

Key losses: Jeff Bowles, C; Chad Henkleman, OT; Willis Hudson, DE; Troy Redwine, WR; Brian Smith, WR; Lorenza Washington, SS.

Starters returning: Offense (7): Tony Castillo, G, 6-2/280, Sr.; Coylin Grimes, WR, 6-0/174, Jr.; Josh Gulley, QB, 6-5/202, Soph.; Bo Harrison, WR (moved from TB), 6-2/200, Jr.; Laymonde Lee, G, 6-2/285, Soph.; Robert Waddle, T, 6-3/280, Jr.; Brian Waters, TE, 6-3/235, Soph. **Defense (8):** Anthony Coleman, E, 6-0/240, Sr.; Calvin Davis, FS, 6-1/193, Soph.; Sterling Guest, LB, 6-0/215, Sr.; Steven Hunt, T, 6-4/235, Soph.; Scott Murphy, NT, 6-1/245, Sr.; Justin Ray, LB, 6-1/235, Sr.; Brett Renfro, LB, 6-1/217, Sr.; Avery Wright, CB, 5-10/185, Sr. **Kickers (2):** Jeff Graham, K, 6-2/215, Sr.; Toby Gowin, P, 5-10/155, Sr.

Other key returnees: Hut Allred, RB, Jr. (RS/injury); Phillip Armour, OL, Soph.; Mike Boone, RB, Jr.; Benny Cherry, LB, Jr. (RS/injury); Tubby Coleman, WR, Soph.; Cedric Cromer, RB, Sr.; Chacory Demart, WR, Sr.; Morecellus Hill, LB, Jr.; Phillip Littlejohn, DB, Soph.; Jason Mills, QB, Jr.; Brad Spinks, DE, Sr.; Kelon Wilson, DB, Sr. (RS/injury).

Top newcomers: Starsky Banks, RB, Fr. (RS); Jayson Blaine, OT, Sr. (transfer/Pacific); Ron Boston, LB, Jr. (JC); Josh Cannon, LB, Fr. (RS); Darrin Faler, G, Jr. (transfer/Pacific); Chris Foegelle, OL, Fr. (RS); Robert Grant, DE, Jr. (JC); Shawn Green, DT, Jr. (JC); Lateef Hampton, TE, (JC); Hunter Hunter, OL, Jr. (transfer/Baylor); Dhati Lewis, S, Jr. (JC); Dwyer McKeith, CB, Jr. (JC); Vince Patterson, OT, Fr. (RS); Ron Riley, S, Jr. (JC); Shane York, OL, Jr. (JC).

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Harrison (161 att., 455 yds., 2 TD); Passing: Gulley (166 att., 88 comp., 8 INT, 5 TD, 1,150 yds.); Receiving: Harrison (35 rec., 332 yds., 4 TD); Tackles: Renfro (86); Sacks: Ray (1).

Site: Denton, Texas. **Stadium:** Fouts Field (30,500).

Last league title won: None (first year in league).

SCHEDULE

Sept. 7—Illinois State	Oct. 19—New Mexico State
Sept. 14—at Arizona State	Oct. 26—Nevada
Sept. 21—at Texas A&M	Nov. 2—at Utah State
Sept. 28—Army	Nov. 9—at Boise State
Oct. 5—at Northern Illinois	Nov. 16—Idaho
Oct. 12—Vanderbilt	

Mark Anderson covers Nevada and the Big West for the Reno (Nev.) Gazette-Journal.

SCOUTING THE BIG WEST

Ascending: Utah State. The Aggies have begun to turn it around after two rough seasons. They'll be a force in this conference for some time.

Descending: New Mexico State. The league's other Aggies struggled to finish 4-7 last season and won't be any better after the graduations of quarterback Cody Ledbetter and top receiver Lucious Davis.

Nightmare schedule: Utah State. Three tough September road games in a row send the Aggies to Southern Mississippi, Oklahoma State and Texas Tech. They also host Utah and BYU in the first six weeks.

Dream schedule: Idaho. True, the Vandals open at Wyoming and San Diego State, but most of the rest of the schedule is a breeze: Division I-AA schools St. Mary's (Calif.), Southwest Texas State, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo and Eastern Washington.

Best matchup of the year: Nevada at Utah State, November 9. It's the conference finale for both schools and could very well decide the Big West championship and Las Vegas Bowl representative. The weather conditions in Logan, Utah, that time of year could make things even more interesting.

Worst matchup of the year: North Texas at Texas A&M, September 21. The worst team in the nation's worst conference goes on the road to play one of the country's best teams. This could be uglier than Greg Norman's final day at The Masters.

Bowl bound: Utah State. Only three teams appear to have legitimate shots to make the Las Vegas Bowl: Utah State, Nevada and Idaho. But Nevada and Idaho have to travel to Utah State.

Biggest shoes to fill: Nevada WR Alex Van Dyke's. How often does a receiver win player-of-the-year honors? That's how dominant Van Dyke was last year, when he set an NCAA single-season record with 1,854 yards receiving and led the nation with 129 catches. Damond Wilkins, the Wolf Pack's top returning receiver, will move to Van Dyke's old position on the outside.

Most underrated player: Utah State LB David Gill. Overshadowed is a better word. Gill was dominant last season, but lost out to Louisiana Tech defensive back Willie Smith for conference Defensive Player of the Year. Now Gill could be overshadowed by Idaho defensive end Ryan Phillips, who is a terror against quarterbacks.

Most overrated player: Anyone who makes first- or second-team all-conference in the secondary. Reportedly, pass defense is played in the Big West, but no one has actually seen it.

Best coach: Boise State's Pokey Allen. He turned a 3-8 team from his first season in 1993 into a 13-2 squad the next year. Although last season's team under-achieved at 7-4, the Broncos were beset by distractions. Allen battled cancer that threatened his life (he almost died July 4 in a Seattle hospital), and one newspaper reported during the season that 17 players had been arrested within a year's time.

Best staff: Utah State. From John L. Smith on down, this is a solid group. Art

HONOR ROLL

Best offensive backfield:	Nevada.
Best wide receivers:	Nevada.
Best offensive line:	New Mexico State.
Best defensive line:	Idaho.
Best linebackers:	Nevada.
Best secondary:	Utah State.
Best special teams:	Utah State.
Hardest hitter:	Ryan Phillips, DE, Idaho.
Best backup quarterback:	The loser of the Eric Bennett-John Dutton battle at Nevada.
Best pro prospect:	Abu Wilson, RB, Utah State.

RANKING THE RECRUITING

Top recruit in parentheses

1. Utah State (DT John Latu). Don't forget about WRs Nakia Jenkins and Steve Smith, DL Adam Jones and OL Mark Rommel.
2. Nevada (WR Nimoy Triplett).
3. Idaho (OL Matthew Yonan).
4. North Texas (TE Lateef Hampton).
5. Boise State (OG Walter Cheeks).
6. New Mexico State (DL Tim Engelhardt).

Valero, also in charge of the offensive line, is the assistant head coach. Bob Petrino is the offensive coordinator; Chris Smeland the defensive coordinator. Linebacker coach Mike Cox is well-respected.

Coach on the hot seat: Whomever succeeds Chris Ault at Nevada. Assistant head coach Jeff Tisdell was the odds-on favorite at press time, and he has plenty of community support. No matter who it is, he has a tough act to follow: Ault won 163 games in 19 seasons after taking over the program in 1976.

Best bets: The Las Vegas Bowl will have more empty seats than full ones, prompting talk (again) of moving the game elsewhere. ... Utah State will not start the season 0-5, as it did in 1995. ... A quarterback at a big-time school will transfer to the Big West. Texas' John Dutton transferred to Nevada two years ago, and UCLA's Ryan Fien made the switch to Idaho after last season. Usually, a player who transfers to another Division I-A school must sit out a season. But Idaho technically still is a I-AA school, making him eligible this season. ... Extra security will be needed when Nevada travels to UNLV. Las Vegas, appropriately, is a boxing town. ... Boise State will return from Hawaii with more tans than points. ... Half the Big West teams played in the Big Sky Conference sometime this decade.

Odds and ends: Like every other conference, the Big West is expanding. At least, it plans to. Commissioner Dennis Farrell says no timetable and no solid list of candidates has been established. What is certain is the league will eventually grow from six to eight football-playing schools. ... Boise State will play 12 games this season. The Broncos got the extra game because of their September 21 trip to Hawaii. ... Only nine teams in NCAA history have had a 3,000-yard passer, a 1,000-yard receiver and a 1,000-yard rusher in the same season. Nevada and New Mexico State did it last season. ... Idaho has declared itself a Division I-A program despite not being pro-

PREDICTIONS

ALL-BIG WEST TEAM

OFFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
WR	DAMOND WILKINS, Nevada	6-1/175	Sr.
WR	RYAN IKEBE, Boise State	5-10/185	Sr.
TE	BRIAN WATERS, North Texas	6-3/235	Soph.
T	KEELIN BOULWARE, N. Mexico St.	6-4/285	Sr.
T	MARK ROMMEL, Utah State	6-5/298	Jr.
G	JIM BRECKENRIDGE, N. Mexico St.	6-4/280	Sr.
G	RICHARD ZENK, Idaho	6-5/266	Sr.
C	TED BUTLER, Boise State	6-1/272	Soph.
QB	JOHN DUTTON, Nevada	6-4/220	Soph.
RB	DENVIS MANNIS, N. Mexico St.	5-9/186	Soph.
RB	ABU WILSON, Utah State	6-1/207	Sr.

DEFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
E	DANILO ROBINSON, Utah State	6-1/250	Sr.
T	JAMES CANNIDA, Nevada	6-2/270	Jr.
T	SIONE FIFITA, Boise State	6-1/285	Sr.
E	RYAN PHILLIPS, Idaho	6-3/243	Sr.
LB	DAVID GILL, Utah State	6-0/230	Sr.
LB	DESHONE MYLES, Nevada	6-3/225	Jr.
LB	MIKE CRAWFORD, Nevada	6-2/240	Sr.
CB	DARNELL HASSON, Nevada	6-0/175	Sr.
CB	MIKE HUDSON, Utah State	6-0/194	Sr.
S	JAMES JOHNSON, Nevada	6-0/180	Sr.
S	ANTOINE CHAMBERS, Idaho	5-11/187	Sr.

SPECIALISTS

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
K	MICAH KNORR, Utah State	6-1/179	Sr.
P	NATHAN MORREALE, Utah State	5-11/190	Sr.
KR	JASON BANDY, Utah State	5-8/179	Sr.

PLAYERS OF THE YEAR



OFFENSE:

ABU WILSON
RB, Utah State



DEFENSE:

RYAN PHILLIPS
E, Idaho

TOP NEWCOMERS:

OFFENSE: John Dutton, QB, Nevada
DEFENSE: John Latu, DT, Utah State

moted above I-AA status by the NCAA. Nevertheless, the school will be allowed to play under I-A rules (meaning it will receive 25 annual scholarships and can compete to play in the Las Vegas Bowl), but it cannot vote on I-A matters.

—MARK ANDERSON

1. NOTRE DAME

Offensive strengths: This could be the finest ground attack in Lou Holtz's tenure. ND has quality tailbacks—Randy Kinder, Robert Farmer and Autry Denson—rawboned fullback Marc Edwards and a powerful line. Because of that, it's tough to imagine Holtz letting Ron Powlus throw it more than 20 times a game. Too bad. Powlus has the ability to put up some big numbers.

Offensive weaknesses: Powlus can throw, but who's going to catch? Emmett Mosley managed just 17 receptions in '95, while suspects Malcolm Johnson, Bobby Brown and Cikai Champion combined for none. Holtz had better hope some freshmen are ready to play. Tom Krug was forced to give up football after he was diagnosed with a spine problem, which means inexperienced Jarious Jackson is Powlus' backup.

Defensive strengths: The front seven is the kind of contingent coordinator Bob Davie used to have when he was at Texas A&M. The return of end Melvin Dansby (neck) fortifies the front wall, while linebackers Lyrion Cobbins, Kinnon Tatum, Bert Berry and Kory Minor are big-play types.

Defensive weaknesses: There is a shaky secondary that lacks experience and speed. Cornerback Allen Rossum is solid, but he needs help. Holtz might have to move Denson—originally a corner—to the secondary.

Special teams: Hunter Smith managed just 36.4 yards per punt last year, and the kicking tandem of Kevin Kopka and Scott Cengia was unreliable. Expect freshman kicker Jim Sanson to challenge. Mosley is a solid return man, but he isn't a game-breaker.

Keys to success: ND must find reliable players at wide receiver and in the secondary.

Outlook: The odds favor a return to the national-title hunt for the Irish, but the odds don't catch or defend passes. The Fighting Irish won't be top-five material unless youngsters develop quickly at the speed positions. Holtz appears to have been building toward 1996 and must deliver.

FIGHTING IRISH DATA

Coach: Lou Holtz (92-27-2, 10 years; 208-92-7 overall, 26 years).

1995 record: 9-3 (lost to Florida State in Orange Bowl).

Key losses: Paul Grasmanis, NT; Tom Krug, QB (career-ending spine ailment); Ryan Leahy, G; Brian Magee, SS; Derrick Mayes, WR; LaRon Moore, FS; Charles Stafford, WR; Shawn Wooden, CB; Dusty Zeigler, G.

Starters returning: Offense (7): Pete Chryplewicz, TE, 6-5/265, Sr.; Chris Clevenger, T, 6-8/290, Sr.; Mike Doughty, T, 6-8/313, Sr.; Marc Edwards, FB, 6-0/237, Sr.; Rick Kaczinski, C, 6-4/264, Sr.; Randy Kinder, TB, 6-1/204, Sr.; Ron Powlus, QB, 6-2/222, Jr. Defense (7): Corey Bennett, E, 6-1/251, Jr.; Bert Berry, OLB, 6-3/245, Sr.; Lyrion Cobbins, ILB, 6-0/246, Sr.; Kory Minor, OLB, 6-2/235, Soph.; Allen Rossum, CB, 5-8/178, Jr.; Kinnon Tatum, ILB, 6-0/224, Sr.; Renaldo Wynn, E, 6-3/275, Sr. Kickers (2): Scott Cengia, K, 5-10/180, Jr.; Hunter Smith, P, 6-2/210, Soph.

Other key returnees: Jeremy Akers, G, Sr.; Kurt Belisle, DE, Jr. (RS/knee); Cikai Champion, WR, Sr.; Ivory Covington, CB, Jr.; Melvin Dansby, DE, Sr. (RS/neck); Autry Denson, TB, Soph.; Jarvis Edison, FS, Jr.; Robert Farmer, TB, Sr.; Ty Goode, CB, Jr.; Kevin Kopka, K, Soph.; Benny Guilbeaux, SS, Soph.; Malcolm Johnson, WR, Jr.; Emmett Mosley, WR, Sr.; David Quist, NT, Sr.; Corey Redder, OLB, Jr. (RS/back); Mike Rosenthal, G, Soph.

Top newcomers: Bobby Brown, WR, Fr. (RS); Jason Ching, DL, Fr.; Deke Cooper, WR, Fr.; Jarious Jackson, QB, Fr. (RS); AJani Sanders, SS, Fr. (RS); Jim Sanson, K, Fr.; Shannon Stephens, CB, Fr. (RS); Brad Williams, DL, Fr.

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Kinder (143 att., 809 yds., 9 TD); Passing: Powlus (217 att., 124 comp., 7 INT, 12 TD, 1,853 yds.); Receiving: Edwards (25 rec., 361 yds., 3 TD); Tackles: Cobbins (105); Sacks: Wynn (6.5).

Site: South Bend, Ind. **Stadium:** Notre Dame (59,075).

INDEPENDENTS

PREDICTIONS

1. NOTRE DAME
2. EAST CAROLINA
3. ARMY
4. NAVY
5. SW LOUISIANA
6. LOUISIANA TECH
7. NORTHERN ILLINOIS
8. NORTHEAST LOUISIANA
9. ARKANSAS STATE
10. CENTRAL FLORIDA
11. ALABAMA-BIRMINGHAM



UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

Senior fullback Marc Edwards is the leading returning receiver for the Fighting Irish.

SCHEDULE

Sept. 5—at Vanderbilt	Nov. 2—Navy (at Dublin, Ireland)
Sept. 14—Purdue	Nov. 9—at Boston College
Sept. 21—at Texas	Nov. 16—Pittsburgh
Sept. 28—Ohio State	Nov. 23—Rutgers
Oct. 12—Washington	Nov. 30—at Southern California
Oct. 19—Air Force	

2. EAST CAROLINA

Offensive strengths: Marcus Crandell has shattered all but one of Jeff Blake's passing records. He has experience, savvy and an understanding of coach Steve Logan's sophisticated offense. A bevy of veteran receivers, led by Mitchell Galloway, makes Crandell even more dangerous.

Offensive weaknesses: A line lacking experience and depth could put Crandell's mobility to use, and he's not at his best when throwing on the run. The backfield also lacks a proven runner. Sophomores Scott Harley,

Daryl Jones and Raymond Mabry and true freshman Jamie Wilson will battle for the job. **Defensive strengths:** The Pirates have speed, aggressiveness, confidence and an attitude. Linebackers Carlos Brown, B.J. Crane and Marvin Burke are experienced. Strong safety Daren Hart, part of a strong secondary, is a menace to opposing running games, and tackle Lorenzo West has a knack for finding the quarterback.

Defensive weaknesses: With four-year starters Mark Libiano, Morris Foreman and Walter Scott gone, someone has to step up as a leader. The line is young, with several sophomores being counted on.

Special teams: Despite his MVP performance in the Liberty Bowl, kicker Chad Holcomb remains a mystery. Inconsistency has been his albatross for three years. Punter Matt Levine had a subpar 1995 and could be challenged by a true freshman.

Keys to success: The Pirates must establish a threat in the backfield to keep pressure off Crandell. That means the offensive line must stay healthy and mature quickly.

Outlook: A soft schedule should give the Pirates their second consecutive unbeaten season at home. If they can steal a couple of victories on the road, a third consecutive Liberty Bowl berth is likely.

PIRATES DATA

Coach: Steve Logan (23-23, 4 years).

1995 record: 9-3 (beat Stanford in Liberty Bowl).

Key losses: Aaron Black, OLB; Morris Foreman, OLB; Mark Libiano, OLB; Emmanuel McDaniel, CB; Jerris McPhail, RB; Walter Scott, DT; Kevin Wiggins, C.

Starters returning: Offense (9): Lamont Burns, G, 6-5/273, Sr.; Marcus Crandell, QB, 6-0/204, Sr.; Mitchell Galloway, WR, 5-10/174, Sr.; Jamie Gray, T, 6-2/293, Sr.; Shane McPherson, G, 6-3/280, Sr.; Jason Nichols, WR, 5-11/171, Jr.; Scott Richards, TE, 6-5/251, Sr.; Larry Shannon, WR, 6-6/200, Jr.; Ron Suddith, T, 6-2/297, Sr. Defense (6): Marvin Burke, MLB, 6-1/249, Sr.; Travis Darden, NT, 6-3/252, Soph.; Daren Hart, SS, 5-10/195, Sr.; David Hart, FS, 5-10/183, Sr.; Dwight Henry, CB, 5-11/175, Sr.; Lorenzo West, T, 6-3/245, Sr. Kickers (2): Chad Holcomb, K, 6-2/175, Sr.; Matt Levine, P, 5-9/205, Jr.

Other key returnees: Carlos Brown, OLB, Sr.; Roderick Coleman, OLB, Soph.; Buck Collins, DT, Soph. (RS/academics); Mondell Corbett, DT, Soph.; B.J. Crane, OLB, Sr.; Scott Harley, RB, Soph.; Daryl Jones, RB, Soph.; Raymond Mabry, RB, Soph.; Perez Mattison, WR, Jr. (RS/academics); Danny Moore, C, Soph. (RS/academics); Troy Smith, WR, Soph.; Kelvin Suggs, CB, Soph.; Stacey Whitehead, OT, Jr. **Top newcomers:** Freddie Claybrooks, OLB, Fr. (RS); Damon Davis, RB, Fr. (RS); Mike Garth, OL, Jr. (JC); Jeff Kerr, LB, Fr. (RS); Dwayne Ledford, DT, Fr. (RS); Raymond Massey, LB, Fr.; Chris Satterfield, DB, Fr.; Jamie Wilson, RB, Fr.

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Harley (61 att., 263 yds., 1 TD); Passing: Crandell (447 att., 235 comp., 12 INT, 18 TD, 2,751 yds.); Receiving: Galloway (46 rec., 619 yds., 3 TD); Tackles: Daren Hart (92); Sacks: West (9).

Site: Greenville, N.C. **Stadium:** Dowdy-Ficklen (35,000).

SCHEDULE

Sept. 7—E. Tennessee St.	Nov. 2—Arkansas State
Sept. 14—at West Virginia	Nov. 9—at Virginia Tech
Sept. 21—at South Carolina	Nov. 16—Ohio U.
Sept. 28—Central Florida	Nov. 23—at Memphis
Oct. 10—Southern Miss	Nov. 30—N.C. State (at Charlotte)
Oct. 19—at Miami (Fla.)	

3. ARMY

Offensive strengths: By leading Army on a dramatic, game-clinching, 99-yard scoring drive that beat Navy last year, Ronnie McAda cemented his status as the school's best-ever wishbone quarterback. Though he needs to improve on last year's 50.5 percent passing, he makes excellent decisions on the option and is a tremendous leader. Rashad Hodge, Jeff Brizic and all-purpose threat Ron Thomas are experienced halfbacks. Ron Leshinski is a stalwart at tight end.

Offensive weaknesses: A line that lost

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four starters. Kyle Scott is set at center, and Dave Beard and Tim Booth appear steady at tackle. But the guard spots are shaky, and they are crucial to an option offense.

Defensive strengths: The front seven is in pretty good shape. Senior Colin Kearns is a reliable anchor at nose tackle, with classmate C.W. Estes finally healthy at tackle. Ben Kotwica and Stephen King are experienced run-stoppers at inside linebacker.

Defensive weaknesses: The Cadets may not throw too often, but their inexperienced secondary will invite opponents to load up. Cornerback Garland Gay and free safety Robert Brown, a converted cornerback, are the only certainties.

Special teams: J. Parker made 9-of-13 field-goal attempts last year, with a long of 48, so the Cadets are set. There is no such security at punter, where inexperienced Scot Lord has never kicked in a game. Thomas is an excellent kick returner, but Army needs to find someone to return punts.

Key to success: Army must solve its offensive line problems and keep pressure off a jittery secondary.

Outlook: Army came within 10 points of an eight-victory season last season and faces a cushy schedule that almost guarantees a winning record this year. How much the Cadets accomplish beyond that depends on the offensive line and the secondary. Army could have its best team in years.

CADETS DATA

Coach: Bob Sutton (24-30-1, 5 years).

1995 record: 5-5-1.

Key losses: Bill Blair, OT; Tom Burrell, DT; Jim Cantelupo, FS; Steve Carpenter, RB; John Conroy, FB; Joel Davis, G; Bill Doult, OLB; Ian Hughes, P; Al Roberts, DT; Ed Stover, G; Ray Tomasits, SS; Mike Wells, OT.

Starters returning: **Offense (5):** Rashad Hodge, RB, 6-1/200, Sr.; Ron Leshinski, TE, 6-3/240, Sr.; Ronnie McAda, QB, 6-3/198, Sr.; Kyle Scott, C, 6-3/265, Sr.; Ron Thomas, SE, 5-11/170, Sr. **Defense (6):** Robert Brown, FS (moved from CB), 6-0/180, Jr.; Garland Gay, CB, 5-10/185, Sr.; Colin Kearns, NT, 6-1/255, Sr.; Stephen King, ILB, 6-1/225, Sr.; Ben Kotwica, ILB, 5-11/205, Sr.; Chad Sultano, OLB, 6-1/220, Jr.

Kickers (1): J. Parker, K, 5-10/170, Sr.

Other key returnees: Larry Angles, DE, Soph.; Dave Beard, OT, Jr.; Tim Booth, OT, Sr.; Jeff Brizic, RB, Sr.; Doug Chadwick, G, Sr.; Mike Coerper, OLB, Sr. (RS/knee); C.W. Estes, DT, Sr.; Scott Eichelberger, OLB, Sr.; Rich Fredricks, OT, Sr.; Brian King, OLB, Soph.; Scot Lord, P, Jr.; Brad Miller, SE, Jr.; Tom Mullins, DB, Sr.; Demetrius Perry, FB, Sr.; Coby Short, RB, Sr.; Adam Thompson, QB, Jr.; Bobby Williams, RB, Soph.

Top newcomers: None.

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: McAda (154 att., 701 yds., 10 TD); Passing: McAda (111 att., 56 comp., 6 INT, 5 TD, 761 yds.); Receiving: Leshinski (15 rec., 210 yds., 2 TD); Tackles: Kotwica (66); Sacks: Eichelberger (2.5).

Site: West Point, N.Y. **Stadium:** Michie (39,929).

SCHEDULE

Sept. 14—Ohio	Oct. 26—at Miami (Ohio)
Sept. 21—Duke	Nov. 2—Lafayette
Sept. 28—at North Texas	Nov. 9—Air Force
Oct. 5—Yale	Nov. 16—at Syracuse
Oct. 12—at Rutgers	Dec. 7—Navy (at Philadelphia)
Oct. 19—Tulane	

4. NAVY

Offensive strengths: Ten starters return to trigger coach Charlie Weatherbie's spread option, including two quarterbacks with starting experience—Chris McCoy, an excellent runner, and Ben Fay, a better passer. Tim Cannada and Omar Nelson are proven runners. Brian Dreschler is a solid center.

Offensive weaknesses: Neither McCoy nor Fay was consistent or complete enough to win the job outright last year. The left side of the line must be replaced, and Navy needs more speed in the backfield and at receiver.

Defensive strengths: Sean Andrews tied



UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY

Clint Bruce will have to carry the load for Navy, as he is the only returning starter at linebacker.

for first in the nation with eight interceptions last year and teams with Robert Green in an excellent cornerback tandem. Clint Bruce is a tackling machine at linebacker, and Chad Holzapfel is a budding star on a deep line.

Defensive weaknesses: The Middies must replace big-play specialists Andy Person (end) and Fernando Harris (linebacker) and rebuild their safety line.

Special teams: It's unclear whether Derek Hotchkiss or David Lark will replace Brian Schrum at punter. Neither has kicked in a game. Further uncertainty prevails at kicker, where Jason Covarrubias (7-of-15 on field-goal attempts) and Tom Vanderhorst are likely to rotate.

Key to success: A quarterback needs to step up and be the kind of all-purpose guy Weatherbie's complex offense demands.

Outlook: Despite the disappointment of just missing a winning season, the Middies made significant strides last year and enter this season primed to continue the development.

MIDSHIPMEN DATA

Coach: Charlie Weatherbie (5-6, 1 year; 20-25 overall, 4 years).

1995 record: 5-6.

Key losses: Mark Hammond, DT; Fernando Harris, ILB; Bryce Minamy, OT; Andy Person, DE; Brian Schrum, P; Garrett Smith, G; Joe Speed, SS; Andy Thompson, S.

Starters returning: **Offense (9):** LeBron Butts, WR, 6-2/190, Jr.; Tim Cannada, FB, 5-10/196, Jr.; Brian Dreschler, C, 5-10/250, Jr.; J.D. Gainey, G, 6-1/255, Jr.; Astor Heaven, WR, 6-2/203, Sr.; Chris McCoy, QB, 5-9/186, Jr.; Patrick McGrew, Slot, 5-11/225, Jr.; Will Smith, Slot, 5-4/170, Sr.; Scott Zimmerman, T, 6-3/238, Sr. **Defense (6):** Gervy Alota, FS, 5-10/187, Jr.; Sean Andrews, CB, 5-10/176, Jr.; Clint Bruce, ILB, 6-0/234, Sr.; Robert Green, CB, 5-9/184, Sr.; Chad Holzapfel, T, 6-5/250, Sr.; Michael Ogden, E, 6-1/220, Jr.

Kickers (1): Jason Covarrubias, K, 5-10/173, Jr.

Other key returnees: Howard Bryant, Slot, Sr.; Travis Cooley, LB, Jr.; Adam Crecion, SS, Soph.; Irv Dingle, FB, Soph.; Ben Fay, QB, Sr.; Lester Fortney, C, Sr.; Derek Hotchkiss, P, Soph.; Denis Kane, DE, Jr.; David Lark, P, Sr.; Kevin Lewis, SS, Jr.; Dave Loya, G, Jr.; Omar Nelson, FB, Sr.; Mike Ogden, DE, Jr.; Neal Plaskonsky, WR, Sr.; Tom Poulter, DT, Sr.; Cal Quinn, DE, Sr.; Matt Scanlan, CB, Sr.; Cory Scherm, Slot, Sr.; Ross Scott, Slot, Sr.; Jeff Smith, G, Sr.; Rashad Smith, S, Jr.; Sean Smith, G, Sr.; Greg Summa, OT, Jr.; Tom Vanderhorst, K, Soph.; David Viger, DT, Jr.

Top newcomers: None.

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: McCoy (168 att., 803 yds., 7 TD); Passing: Fay (144 att., 73 comp., 5 INT, 3 TD, 869 yds.); Receiving: Scherm (25 rec., 327 yds., 1 TD); Tackles: Bruce (117); Sacks: Bruce (2).

Site: Annapolis, Md. **Stadium:** Navy-Marine Corps Memorial (30,000).

SCHEDULE

Sept. 7—at Rutgers	Nov. 2—Notre Dame (at Dublin, Ire.)
Sept. 21—SMU	Nov. 9—Delaware
Sept. 28—at Boston College	Nov. 16—Tulane
Oct. 5—Duke	Nov. 23—at Georgia Tech
Oct. 12—at Air Force	Dec. 7—Army (at Philadelphia)
Oct. 26—at Wake Forest	

5. SOUTHWESTERN LOUISIANA

Offensive strengths: USL set a bushel of school records in 1995, averaging 434 yards and 31.9 points, and most of the key skill people are back. Jake Delhomme, entering his fourth season as a starter, is the school's all-time passing leader and has two deadly targets in Brandon Stokley—the coach's son—and Donald Richard. Kenyon Cotton moves from fullback to tailback.

Offensive weaknesses: Losing three seniors on the line means new faces will have to mature in a hurry. Tackle Anthony Clement, the best of the line returnees, teams with guard Keith Ware to give USL 665 pounds of beef on the left side.

Defensive strengths: Aggressive young linebackers will be the focus of the speed-oriented defense, as Chuck Woodall, Kelcy Dotson and Pat Brennan lead the way. Top tackler Damon Mason is back at safety, and Britt Jackson is a solid corner.

Defensive weaknesses: USL is thin in the trenches on defense after the departure of all-time sacks leader Jeff Mitchell. Tackle Paul Cabbie must rebound from a spring shoulder injury, and getting speedy Brian Jackson back at free safety after he missed 1995 with a knee injury would be a major plus. The secondary lacks depth.

Special teams: Record-setting kicker Mike Shafer is gone, but coach Nelson Stokley thinks redshirt freshman Ben Mader can assume duties. Mike Jones is back after averaging 37.1-yards per punt. Attention must be paid to the return and coverage units, since the Cajuns will need every break they can get against a rugged schedule.

Keys to success: Keeping Delhomme healthy and upright is vital. Given time, he can find his top targets, which can keep USL in games against superior foes.

Outlook: It's the toughest schedule in school history, including four bowl teams (Florida, Texas A&M, Virginia Tech and Texas Tech). That may prevent the Cajuns from posting a fourth consecutive winning season.

RAGIN' CAJUNS DATA

Coach: Nelson Stokley (54-55-1, 10 years).

1995 record: 6-5 Big West; 4-2/72nd.

Key losses: Lerdric Gilmore, FS; Marlon Goff, LB; Sam Heinen, G; Keno Hills, OT; Deryk McKinley, DT; Jeff Mitchell, DE; Marcus Prier, TB; Tim Sensley, CB; Mike Shafer, K; Luke Yarnell, C.

Starters returning: **Offense (7):** Anthony Clement, T, 6-7/320, Jr.; Kenyon Cotton, TB (moved from FB), 6-0/259, Sr.; Jake Delhomme, QB, 6-2/197, Sr.; Donald Richard, WR, 6-1/185, Sr.; Cody Romero, TE, 6-2/240, Sr.; Franco Smith, WR, 6-0/171, Jr.; Keith Ware, G, 6-1/345, Jr. **Defense (7):** Pat Brennan, LB, 6-1/225, Sr.; Paul Cabbie, T, 6-2/261, Sr.; Kelcy Dotson, LB, 6-1/228, Sr.; Joseph Evans, E, 6-2/240, Sr.; Britt Jackson, CB, 5-9/182, Sr.; Damon Mason, SS, 5-9/175, Sr.; Chuck Woodall, LB, 6-2/220, Soph. **Kickers (1):** Mike Jones, P, 5-10/180, Sr.

Other key returnees: Ben Archer, C, Soph.; Marty Cannon, G, Jr.; Chad Hakemack, OT, Soph.; Gregg Hamilton, FB, Jr.; Brian Jackson, FS, Jr. (RS/knee); Charles Johnson, FS, Soph.; Garrett Johnson, CB, Jr.; Billy Sanders, LB, Jr.; Mario Stephens, DE, Jr.; Brandon Stokley, WR, Soph.

Top newcomers: Tyrone Abrams, DT, Jr. (JC); Mark Buford, TE, Fr. (RS/shoulder); Lamar Dawn, S, Soph. (JC); Peter Dugas, TB, Fr. (RS); Mike Ellis, FS, Jr. (JC); Ben Mader, K, Fr. (RS); Chad Peterson, C, Jr. (JC); Chris Shaw, P, Fr. (RS); Gerald Stewart, LB, Fr. (RS).

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Cotton (166 att., 678 yds., 9 TD); Passing: Delhomme (351 att., 190 comp., 10 INT, 20 TD, 2,761 yds.); Receiving: Stokley (75 rec., 1,121 yds., 9 TD); Tackles: Mason (88); Sacks: Cabbie (4). **Site:** Lafayette, La. **Stadium:** Cajun Field (31,000).

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—at Florida	Oct. 19—at Ala.-Birmingham
Sept. 14—Texas A&M	Oct. 26—Memphis
Sept. 21—at Southern Miss	Nov. 2—at Virginia Tech
Sept. 28—at Louisiana Tech	Nov. 9—Northern Illinois
Oct. 5—Houston	Nov. 16—at Texas Tech
Oct. 12—Arkansas State	

6. LOUISIANA TECH

Offensive strengths: Strong-armed senior Jason Martin will be throwing to wide receiver Chad Mackey, third in the nation in receptions last season, and Dean Jackson, the Big West's top punt returner in '95. Tight end Josh Bradley is another capable receiver. Lee Ragsdale, who averaged more than seven yards a carry last season, buoys the running game.

Offensive weaknesses: Four line starters must be replaced. New coach Gary Crowton, who served as coordinator last season, is hoping JC transfers Jon Larsen, Justin Moss and Robert Saums can plug holes.

Defensive strengths: End Keith Washington, who missed last season because of an injury, and linebacker Rodney Lloyd are back. In addition, JC transfer end William Mayes is highly regarded. Another player who could make an impact is tackle Howard Thornton.

Defensive weaknesses: The Bulldogs couldn't stop the pass last year, which was their downfall. Cornerback Willie Smith, who tied for the national lead in interceptions in 1995, died of a gunshot wound in the offseason. Starting safety Eric Starks returns. Derrick Parker, JC cornerback Yemi Cummings-John or Aaron Puckett could move into the lineup. Jonathan Maxwell, the fastest player on the team, has been moved from tailback to corner. Marlon Ford, another speedster, also could see action. The Bulldogs will be working with an all-new linebacker corps.

Special teams: Kicker Marty Kent was 12-of-14 on field-goal attempts and led the team in scoring with 74 points. Three players are competing for punting chores.

Keys to success: Assembling a capable offensive line is critical. Also, patching up the holes in the secondary and finding some solid linebackers are priorities.

Outlook: The Bulldogs, who competed in the Big West last season, are loaded with stars at the skill positions. But they have questions in the secondary, at linebacker and along the offensive line. With games against Baylor, Mississippi State, Texas A&M and Arkansas in the first two months, rebuilding will have to be completed quickly.

BULLDOGS DATA

Coach: Gary Crowton (first year).

1995 record: 5-6. Big West: 2-4/7th.

Key losses: Jerry Byrd, G; Wilford Carter, S; Brody Clark, LB; Steve Hampton, G; Shannon Jenkins, LB; Dedrick Johnson, DT; Derrick Moore, DT; Mike Mote, G; Lance Reed, LB; Willie Smith, CB; Grant Williams, OT.

Starters returning: **Offense (8):** Josh Bradley, TE, 6-7/255, Jr.; Francis Figaro, WR, 5-11/163, Sr.; Clay Hopkins, T, 6-5/279, Sr.; Dean Jackson, WR, 5-10/180, Sr.; Chad Mackey, WR, 6-2/194, Sr.; Jason Martin, CB, 6-3/220, Sr.; Lee Ragsdale, TB, 5-9/185, Sr.; Terence Wilson, FB, 5-10/205, Jr. **Defense (4):** James Crockett, CB, 5-10/185, Soph.; Titus Daniel, E, 6-0/202, Sr.; Eric Starks, S, 5-8/168, Jr.; DeJuan Washington, E, 6-2/205, Sr.

Kickers (1): Marty Kent, K, 5-9/160, Jr. **Other key returnees:** Marlon Ford, S, Soph.; Adrian Fredericks, LB, Soph.; Kenneth Gilchrist, G, Sr. (RS); Rodney Lloyd, LB, Soph. (RS); Jonathan Maxwell, CB (moved from TB), Sr.; Shawn O'Toole, OT, Soph.; Derrick Parker, S, Jr.; Aaron Puckett, CB, Soph.; Myron Smith, LB, Jr.; Howard Thornton, DT, Sr.; Keith Washington, DE, Sr. (RS/injury); Toriano Young, OT, Jr.

Top newcomers: Sean Cangelosi, WR, Fr.; Joey Chustz, G, Fr. (RS); Yemi Cummings-John, CB, Jr. (JC); Jon Larsen, G, Jr. (JC); William Mayes, DE, Jr. (JC); Justin Moss, G, Jr. (JC); Desmond Nunnery, DE, Fr. (RS); Tim Rattay, QB, Soph. (JC); Robert Saums, C, Jr. (JC).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Ragsdale (108 att., 768 yds., 5 TD); **Passing:** Martin (370 att., 206 comp., 12 INT, 24 TD, 2,606 yds.); **Receiving:** Mackey (90 rec., 1,253 yds., 9 TD); **Tackles:** Starks (97); **Sacks:** D. Washington (4). **Site:** Ruston, La. **Stadium:** Joe Aillet (30,200).

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—Middle Tenn. St.	Oct. 12—Arkansas
Sept. 7—Baylor	(at Little Rock, Ark.)
(at Shreveport, La.)	Oct. 19—Toledo
Sept. 14—at Central Michigan	Oct. 26—Ala.-Birmingham
Sept. 21—at Mississippi State	Nov. 2—at Northern Illinois
Sept. 28—SW Louisiana	Nov. 9—at Arkansas State
Oct. 5—at Texas A&M	

7. NORTHERN ILLINOIS

Offensive strengths: The Huskies return 94 percent of their rushing yards after ranking 10th in the nation last season. Tailback Charles Talley is back after ranking 10th in the nation with 1,540 yards last year. Kent Booth is a solid guard.

Offensive weaknesses: Three of last year's line starters were drafted by CFL teams and their replacements have potential, but there is little depth. Projected starting quarterback Brandon Barker, a nephew of Bubby Brister, has just three career starts. He'll benefit from receiver Deon Mitchell and tight end Mitch Jacoby.

Defensive strengths: With a good linebacking corps, the Huskies will switch from a 3-4 read-and-react defense to an attack 4-3. Steve Smith and Perry Amoo lead the linebackers. The Huskies could receive a boost from linebacker Mandel Hester, who was on the Butkus Award list last season before hurting his knee.

Defensive weaknesses: The Huskies lack bodies and experience up front. The lone returning tackle (Steve Rhoads) didn't play in the spring because of knee surgery. Look for JC transfers to step in.

Special teams: The return game is strong, thanks to Leon Moody and Aldarryl Jones, but the kicking could cause problems. Brian Clark, who made 4-of-6 field-goal attempts, may lose his job to true freshman Kent Baker, who also may punt.

Keys to success: Joe Novak, an assistant at NIU from 1980-83, returns after 12 seasons as defensive coordinator for Indiana. His new defense won't work if the line struggles.

Outlook: NIU, which played in the Big West last season and will join the Mid-American in '97, have stressed effort, which they'll need a lot of to overcome a predictable offense and a defense that lacks speed and size up front. But any rough spots NIU encounters will be buffered by a soft schedule that may guarantee a winning season.

HUSKIES DATA

Coach: Joe Novak (first year).

1995 record: 3-8. Big West: 3-3/4th

Key losses: Duane Arrindell, G; Jamie Dobay, P; Todd Garito, FS; Aaron Gilbert, QB; C.J. Rose, DE; Derek Sholdice, OT; Ralph Strickland, LB; Mike Sutherland, C; Hollis Thomas, NG; Brandon Willis, SE.

Starters returning: **Offense (5):** Kent Booth, G, 6-3/308, Jr.; Anthony Griffin, FB, 5-10/221, Sr.; Mitch Jacoby, TE, 6-5/245, Sr.; Jamie Macdonald, T, 6-5/308, Jr.; Charles Talley, TB, 6-0/229, Sr. **Defense (9):** Aldarryl Jones, FS (moved from SS), 5-10/180, Sr.; Daren Lloyd, LB, 6-0/226, Sr.; Orlando Peterson, LB, 6-1/226, Sr.; Steve Rhoads, T, 6-3/262, Sr.; Steve Smith, LB, 5-10/220, Jr.; Patrick Stephen, FS (moved from CB), 5-10/177, Soph.; William Triplett, CB, 5-11/163, Jr. **Kickers (1):** Brian Clark, K, 5-11/190, Soph.

Other key returnees: Perry Amoo, LB, Soph.; Brandon Barker, QB, Jr.; Orlando Bowen, LB, Soph. (RS/back); Scott Florence, TB, Sr.; Mandel Hester, LB, Sr. (RS/knee); Nick Lundin, C, Soph.; Deon Mitchell, WR, Soph.; Leon Moody, WR/KR, Sr.; Salim Phillips, SS, Jr.; Dan Stankowski, DE, Soph.; Wade White, DE, Sr.; Bill Wise, G, Soph.

Top newcomers: Kent Baker, P/K, Fr.; Glenn Bloodsaw, LB, Fr. (RS); Abie Camacho, DT, Jr. (JC); Will Ford, DE, Jr. (JC); Randall Foster, QB, Fr. (RS); Greg Merow, C, Fr. (RS); Bill Simpson, NG, Jr. (JC); Rhassan Smith, WR, Fr. (RS).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Talley (285 att., 1,540 yds., 7 TD); **Passing:** Barker (32 att., 15 comp., 1 INT, 2 TD, 291 yds.); **Receiving:** Mitchell (23 rec., 272 yds., 2

THE PRESSURE'S ON

It's time for Holtz to deliver a title—or else

It shouldn't surprise anybody that Lou Holtz began making excuses for the 1996 season in March. Some might wonder what took him so long.

Notre Dame's boss hasn't yet declared Navy, which the Fighting Irish will crush this November in Dublin, "every bit as good as the Cowboys."

That will come. But Holtz was quick to point out during his pre-spring news conference that seven Notre Dame foes have off dates before facing the Irish. Holtz also was whining about having to play five games in November and just two in October.



Holtz

It's time for Notre Dame to start winning again and not just against the teams it's supposed to beat. The Fighting Irish failed to overcome the two best opponents on their schedule last year—Ohio State and Florida State—and appeared slower and less talented than either team. During the past two seasons, we have been treated to a variety of rationalizations for a combined 15-8-1 performance, including poor senior leadership and a couple of recruiting classes that didn't live up to their billing. We have heard how Notre Dame's tougher academic requirements disqualify up to half of the nation's top prep prospects—particularly coveted receivers and defensive backs—from consideration. And how rigorous the coursework is for those who get in.

What is this, Vanderbilt? Why not make every Top 25 team donate a great player to Notre Dame?

It's time for Holtz to stop giving reasons why Notre Dame hasn't won and start winning—or get out. He has a lifetime contract, but a few more years like the past two, and he might find that the Grim Reaper is an ND alumnus—and an angry one at that. The Irish must move their offensive attack into the 1990s by using more three- and four-receiver sets and throwing more. In February, Holtz said he wanted to put it up "30-35 times a game." One month later, he said, "We're going to look at some things, but we're not going to change drastically on offense." By October, ND could be running the single wing.

Sixteen starters return from last year's Orange Bowl team, a figure that would create significant optimism at most schools. At Notre Dame, the defense already has presented opening arguments. If Holtz can't get the Irish back into the top five, maybe he should step aside and let the school find someone who can.

—MICHAEL BRADLEY

TD); Tackles: Smith (77); Sacks: White (2).
Site: DeKalb, Ill. Stadium: Huskie (31,000).

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—at Maryland
Sept. 7—Western Illinois
Sept. 14—at Penn State
Sept. 21—at Arkansas State
Sept. 28—Texas-El Paso
Oct. 5—North Texas

Oct. 19—at Louisville
Oct. 26—Akron
Nov. 2—Louisiana Tech
Nov. 9—at SW Louisiana
Nov. 16—at Oregon State

8. NORTHEAST LOUISIANA

Offensive strengths: Even though he won't have big-play receiver Stepfret Williams at his disposal, quarterback Raymond Philyaw is one of the nation's hidden gems. Carson Fields is a capable running back, and Shawn Jenkins has star potential at right tackle.

Offensive weaknesses: The Indians need help up front, where the left side of the line must be replaced. Fields doesn't have much help, and Philyaw had better hope David Smith and Marty Booker were paying attention to Williams the past couple of years.

Defensive strengths: Drew Fabianich was hired as coordinator after NLU allowed 478.9 yards and 37.6 points per game last year. Fabianich, who arrives from Tennessee-Martin, will try to craft an attacking 4-3 scheme around nine returning starters.

Defensive weaknesses: Only four lettermen return along the line, meaning NLU probably won't be any better against the run than it was last season (268.9 per game). And even though experience returns in the secondary, opposing passers completed 60.7 percent of their attempts last season.

Special teams: Jason Pope dropped 17 punts inside the opponents' 20 last year, a school record, but averaged just 37.4 yards a boot. Kicker Cory Babineaux made just 2-of-6 field-goal attempts last year, with a long of 31 yards. Smith and Alonzo Hampton have big-play potential as return specialists.

Key to success: NLU must find solid performers on both lines or risk being outmuscled by the heavyweights on their schedule.

Outlook: NLU enters its third season of Division I-A play with a deeper, more talented roster, but the Indians remain something of a beefed-up I-AA team. Another brutal schedule looms, and the Indians lack the strength to withstand the charge of deeper, more mature programs.

INDIANS DATA

Coach: Ed Zaunbrecher (5-17, two years).

1995 record: 2-9.

Key losses: Orlando Bobo, G; Keith Dailey, TE; Eric Foster, FB; Kevin Graham, OT; Charles Green, DB; Chris Hearon, WR; Charles Randolph, TE; Wylan Terrell, DT; Stepfret Williams, WR.

Starters returning: **Offense** (4): Carson Fields, RB, 5-9/196, Jr.; Tommy Franklin, C, 6-1/263, Jr.; Shawn Jenkins, T, 6-3/294, Jr.; Raymond Philyaw, QB, 5-10/212, Sr. **Defense** (9): Lawrence Arnold, CB, 5-9/163, Sr.; Steve Foley, T, 6-4/260, Jr.; Damien Foster, E, 6-3/262, Jr.; Alonzo Hampton, FS, 5-11/170, Sr.; Shawn Lang, T (moved from E), 6-4/252, Sr.; Chad Nerenberg, MLB, 6-0/230, Sr.; Tirrell Sylvas, CB, 5-9/177, Jr.; Marlon Turner, LB, 5-10/200, Soph.; Michael Young, SS, 6-2/198, Sr. **Kickers** (2): Cory Babineaux, K, 6-2/175, Soph.; Jason Pope, P, 6-1/225, Sr.

Other key returnees: Marty Booker, WR, Soph.; Regan Cobb, DE, Jr.; Keith Gardner, RB, Jr.; James Landers, G, Soph.; Rod Malcolm, LB, Sr.; Bo Miles, LB, Sr.; Chad Reeder, OT, Jr.; Corey Sampson, CB, Sr.; David Smith, WR, Jr.; Brian Taylor, FS, Soph.; Alfred Thomas, CB, Jr.; Sil Wright, LB, Soph. **Top newcomers:** Derrick Bridges, WR, Fr. (RS); Brian Fuchs, K, Fr. (RS); Michael Harvey, OT, Soph. (RS/JC); Eric Jones, FB, Fr. (RS); Eric Lo, OT, Jr. (JC); Rodney McNeal, DB, Fr.; Shane Pittard, G, Fr. (RS); Felix Richardson, DT, Jr. (JC); Chris Spencer, TE, Fr. (RS).

Returning statistical leaders: **Rushing:** Fields (144 att., 632 yds., 3 TD); **Passing:** Philyaw (320 att., 167 comp., 7 INT, 22 TD, 2,627 yds.); **Receiving:** Gardner (16 rec., 198 yds., 1 TD); **Tackles:** Nerenberg (102); **Sacks:** Cobb (2).
Site: Monroe, La. **Stadium:** Malone (30,427).



Northern Illinois' Charles Talley rushed for 1,540 yards last season, ranking 10th in the nation.

SCHEDULE

Aug. 29—Nicholls State
Sept. 7—Minnesota
Sept. 14—at UCLA
Sept. 21—Sam Houston St.
Sept. 28—Arkansas
(at Little Rock, Ark.)

Oct. 5—Northwestern State
Oct. 19—at Central Florida
Nov. 2—at Mississippi State
Nov. 9—at Auburn
Nov. 16—Jacksonville State
Nov. 23—at Cincinnati

9. ARKANSAS STATE

Offensive strengths: Running back Corey Walker finally lived up to expectations last season, when he rushed for 1,013 yards and caught a team-high 42 passes. A solid line has been toughened by coach John Bobo's drilling. Receiver Reginald Murphy is reliable.

Offensive weaknesses: Who's the quarterback? Brent Pettus barely played as a back-up and JC transfer Jeremie Watkins is coming off knee surgery. Complicating matters is that most of the receivers lack experience.

Defensive strengths: A formerly thin and inexperienced secondary has evolved into a strength behind big-play safety Chappell Mitchell. Gary Jackson and Tim Williams are good ends, and there is some depth.

Defensive weaknesses: The secondary became experienced tacklers last season after making multiple stops downfield for a team that gave up 409.1 yards per game. JC transfers need to shore up the linebacking corps. The interior linemen are sophomores and redshirt freshmen.

Special teams: Finding a punter who can replace Kyle Richardson (40.9-yard average) is unlikely. Kicker Jeff Caldwell needs to return to the form of his first two seasons after making only 5-of-13 field-goal attempts last year. Walker is a dangerous return man.

Key to success: Finding a quarterback who can take advantage of a favorable September schedule.

Outlook: A year after posting its first winning season since 1987, Arkansas State could win six games again, as the schedule is only slightly more difficult and scholarship numbers finally are around 80. A worried administration wants to see sagging attendance figures rise, meaning early victories are needed.

INDIANS DATA

Coach: John Bobo (9-23-1, 3 years).

1995 record: 6-5. Big West: 3-3/74th.

Key losses: Derrick Austin, WR; Johnny Covington, QB;

Leon Cunningham, WR; Carlos Emmons, DE; Rodney Hawthorne, LB; Roy James, OT; Clark McBride, TE; Jerome McIntosh, WR; Jessie Miller, OT; Perry Pylant, G; Kyle Richardson, K; Ray Robins, CB; Bryan Singleton, LB; Clark Watkins, FS; Carlo White, NT.

Starters returning: **Offense** (3): Jason Bennett, C, 6-3/260, Sr.; Brent Turner, G, 6-4/280, Sr.; Corey Walker, RB, 5-10/185, Sr. **Defense** (5): Darrell Baker, CB, 5-10/180, Sr.; Gary Jackson, E, 6-3/220, Sr.; Chappell Mitchell, SS, 5-10/170, Soph.; Matt Smith, T, 6-5/260, Soph.; Torrance Suggs, LB, 6-1/210, Sr. **Kickers** (1): Jeff Caldwell, K, 5-11/165, Sr.

Other key returnees: Rodney Allen, CB, Jr.; Linton Beavers, OLB, Sr.; Ben Dew, G, Sr.; Todd Frohbieter, OT, Soph.; Lennie Johnson, WR, Soph.; Kevin Kammer, TE, Sr.; Scott LaRusso, RB, Soph.; Koetter Little, MLB, Soph.; Roderick Mosley, FS, Sr.; Reginald Murphy, WR, Sr.; Brett Myers, OT, Sr.; Brent Pettus, QB, Jr.; Sedrick Richardson, NT, Soph.; J.J. Washington, WR, Soph.; Clarence Williams, DE, Soph.; Tim Williams, DE, Sr. **Top newcomers:** Lavell Alexander, LB, Jr. (JC); Sean Burdick, C, Jr. (JC); Frank Escobar, WR, Jr. (JC); Donnell Jordan, LB, Jr. (JC); Jeremy Konvalinka, LB, Jr. (JC); Ramone Lee, WR, Fr. (RS); Scott Simons, P, Jr. (JC); Jason Sink, OT, Jr. (JC); Jeremie Watkins, QB, Jr. (JC); Lann Wilf, G, Jr. (JC). **Returning statistical leaders:** **Rushing:** Walker (212 att., 1,013 yds., 9 TD); **Passing:** Pettus (22 att., 12 comp., 1 INT, 2 TD, 136 yds.); **Receiving:** Walker (42 rec., 411 yds., 4 TD); **Tackles:** Suggs (84); **Sacks:** Jackson (6).
Site: Jonesboro, Ark. **Stadium:** Indian (33,410).

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—at Brigham Young
Sept. 7—Austin Peay
Sept. 14—at Ala.-Birmingham
Sept. 21—Northern Illinois
Oct. 5—Central Arkansas
Oct. 12—at SW Louisiana

Oct. 19—SE Missouri State
Oct. 26—at Mississippi
Nov. 2—at East Carolina
Nov. 9—Louisiana Tech
Nov. 16—at Nevada

10. CENTRAL FLORIDA

Offensive strengths: Burly quarterback Daunte Culpepper, who will be a high pick in the NFL one day, has improved his mechanics and should be considerably better even though he was one of Division I-AA's best as a freshman. The line, which returns three starters, should be strong.

Offensive weaknesses: Graduation, injuries and academic failure have left the Knights hoping some incoming freshmen will catch Culpepper's passes. The Knights hope that a trio of young players can replace departed star tailback Marquette Smith. The best might prove to be Johnnie Presley, who saw limited duty last season.

Defensive strengths: All three starting linebackers—Kendrick Thomas, Nakia Reddick and John Bryant—return. Each is a blue-chipper in talent and attitude, if not size.

Defensive weaknesses: The secondary needs more speed and the middle of the line needs more size. Coach Gene McDowell felt the failure to sign more quality defensive backs was the one shortcoming of his first recruiting effort at the I-A level.

Special teams: If receiver Todd Cleveland is academically eligible, he can be one of the nation's best return men. Kicker/punter Charlie Pierce, who hit 10-of-15 field-goal attempts and averaged 40.7 yards per punt in '95, is a pro prospect.

Keys to success: The defense must stop foes so Culpepper can do his thing. Culpepper's efforts would be augmented by the emergence of some receivers.

Outlook: Though UCF now is a I-A school, nearly half the teams on its schedule are from the I-AA ranks. That's good, because the Knights lack the depth of most I-A programs. Regardless, a 5-6 or 6-5 mark could be expected thanks to the soft slate.

GOLDEN KNIGHTS DATA

Coach: Gene McDowell (76-49, 11 years).

1995 record: 6-5 as I-AA independent.

Key losses: Robert Braucht, DT; Scott Braun, TE; Gerod Davis, FB; Emil Ekiyor, DE; Adrian Ellis, SS; Allen Powell, CB; Marquette Smith, TB; Chris Tabscott, G; Matt Wittman, G. **Starters returning:** **Offense** (6): Daunte Culpepper, QB, 6-4/230, Soph.; Alex Galvez, G, 6-0/265, Sr.; Cornell Green, T,

6-5/290, Soph.; Mark Nonsant, WR, 5-11/185, Soph.; Kevin Stewart, T, 6-3/285, Sr.; Stuart Stipe, WR, 6-0/170, Sr.
Defense (7): John Bryant, LB, 6-1/225, Sr.; Darryl Latimore, CB, 5-11/175, Sr.; Jamiel McWhorter, E, 6-2/230, Jr.; Nakia Reddick, LB, 6-1/200, Sr.; Kenton Rickerson, FS, 6-2/175, Jr.; Tarveres Tate, E, 6-2/240, Sr.; Kendrick Thomas, LB, 6-3/240, Sr. **Kickers (1):** Charlie Pierce, K/P, 6-1/180, Sr.
Other key returnees: Jermaine Benoit, DE, Jr.; Todd Cleveland, WR, Jr. (RS/academics); Reginald Doster, CB (moved from WR), Soph.; Ryan Gillis, G, Jr.; Mike Grant, TB, Soph.; Rufus Hall, WR, Jr. (RS/knee); Joey Hubbard, TE, Soph.; Mike Huff, TB, Jr.; Donald Huzzie, FB, Sr.; Marcus Jenkins, OT, Soph.; Johnie Presley, TB, Soph.; Donnell Washington, SS, Jr.; Chris Wrenn, C, Sr. (RS/knee).
Top newcomers: Kenny Clark, WR, Fr.; Nikko Cooper, WR, Jr. (JC); Bill Dayton, C, Soph. (transfer/Miami, Ohio); Fred Harley, DE, Fr.; Willie Johnson, TE, Fr. (RS); Paul Miranda, CB, Soph. (JC); Justin Moore, DT, Fr. (RS); Wesley Moore, WR, Jr. (JC); Tyrell Rice, CB, Fr. (RS).
Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Grant (41 att., 215 yds., 1 TD); Passing: Culpepper (294 att., 168 comp., 10 INT, 12 TD, 2,071 yds.); Receiving: Doster (25 rec., 350 yds., 1 TD); Tackles: Reddick (90); Sacks: Tate (3).
Site: Orlando. **Stadium:** Citrus Bowl (70,349).

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—William & Mary	Oct. 19—Northeast Louisiana
Sept. 7—at South Carolina	Oct. 26—at Georgia Tech
Sept. 14—at New Mexico	Nov. 2—Illinois State
Sept. 21—at Ball State	Nov. 9—at Ala.-Birmingham
Sept. 28—at East Carolina	Nov. 16—Bowling Green
Oct. 12—Samford	

11. ALABAMA-BIRMINGHAM

Offensive strengths: Injuries forced the Blazers to use four quarterbacks last year, so UAB relied heavily on its running game. While coach Watson Brown wants to open up the offense, the rushing attack will continue to be the team's best weapon.

Offensive weaknesses: The Blazers need to shore up a small, thin line. Four starters return from last year's unit, but they average only 6-2 and 265 pounds. And experienced depth is nearly nonexistent.

Defensive strengths: In addition to having three returning starters, the secondary will be boosted by the addition of East Tennessee State transfer Dainon Sidney and the movement of speedster Omar Parker (4.4 in the 40) from receiver to cornerback.

Defensive weaknesses: UAB lost two key line starters, Robert Leslie and Jackie Hurst.

Depth is a problem, and during spring practice the line had trouble stopping the run.

Special teams: Gone are four-year starting kicker Kevin Thomason, four-year return specialist Cedrick Buchannon and punter Jason Powers. Set to replace them are JC All-American kicker Lee Miller, '94 starting punter Kevin Tatarek and either Parker or Sidney as the return man.

Keys to success: UAB must first survive the opening two weeks, when it plays Auburn and Maryland. If the Blazers make it through those games without too many injuries, then they must establish some much-needed depth on both lines.

Outlook: Brown knows his first-year Division I-A team is several years away from being competitive with even mid-level I-A opponents. But UAB has a favorable schedule that includes seven of its final nine games at home. Four or five victories isn't out of the question.

BLAZERS DATA

Coach: Watson Brown (5-6, 1 year; 37-83-1 overall, 11 years).

1995 record: 5-6 as I-AA independent.

Key losses: Cedrick Buchannon, WR/KR; Perry Collier, SS; Terry Collier, RB; Jackie Hurst, DT; Robert Leslie, DE; Jason Powers, P; Keith Register, OT; Kevin Thomason, K.

Starters returning: **Offense (8):** Dale Brown, G, 6-5/275, Soph.; Jody Coulter, T, 6-4/275, Jr.; Kevin Drake, QB, 6-4/182, Jr.; Lamar Lee, TE, 6-2/260, Sr.; Omar Parker, WR

(moved to CB), 6-1/175, Soph.; Johnny Rea, G, 6-0/260, Jr.; Keith Roland, FB, 5-10/225, Sr.; Josh Widner, C, 6-0/250, Sr.
Defense (8): Shawn Alexander, LB, 6-0/225, Jr.; Brian Bozeman, LB, 5-11/205, Soph.; Kerry Frazier, LB, 6-1/215, Sr.; Eric Nation, CB, 5-8/165, Sr.; Isaih Owens, E, 6-2/235, Sr.; Marcel Rachel, CB, 6-0/185, Jr.; Terry Smith, T, 6-4/265, Jr.; Alan Willis, FS, 5-11/185, Jr. **Kickers:** None.

Other key returnees: Thomas Banks, RB, Jr.; Chris Daniels, RB, Soph.; Robert Davis, RB, Sr. (RS); Rodney Hudson, QB, Sr.; Curtis Jeter, DT, Soph.; Lee Miller, K, Jr. (RS); Sternick Morgan, DE, Soph.; Izell Reese, DB, Jr.; Joey Roberto, LB, Sr.; Michael Roberto, DE, Soph.; Kevin Tatarek, P, Sr. (RS); Jake Vest, WR, Soph.

Top newcomers: Lee Jolly, QB, Fr.; Lee Miller, K, Jr. (RS/JC); Al Olieh, LB, Fr.; Wallace Rutledge, DE, Fr. (RS); Dainon Sidney, DB/KR, Jr. (transfer/East Tennessee State); Melvin Sidney, OL, Fr.

Returning statistical leaders: Rushing: Roland (97 att., 463 yds., 4 TD); Passing: Drake (113 att., 51 comp., 6 INT, 3 TD, 691 yds.); Receiving: Lee (16 rec., 224 yds., 2 TD); Tackles: Frazier (91); Sacks: Frazier (4).

Site: Birmingham, Ala. **Stadium:** Legion Field (83,091).

SCHEDULE

Aug. 31—at Auburn	Oct. 26—at Louisiana Tech
Sept. 7—at Maryland	Nov. 2—at Vanderbilt
Sept. 14—Arkansas State	Nov. 9—Central Florida
Sept. 21—Jacksonville State	Nov. 16—Cincinnati
Oct. 5—Western Kentucky	Nov. 21—Charleston Southern
Oct. 19—SW Louisiana	

Writers contributing to this preview were Michael Bradley, free-lance writer (Army, Navy, Northeast Louisiana and Notre Dame); Bruce Brown, Lafayette (La.) Daily Advertiser (Southwestern Louisiana); Cary Estes, Birmingham Post-Herald (Alabama-Birmingham); Jerry Greene, Orlando Sentinel (Central Florida); Mike Grizzard, Greenville (N.C.) Daily Reflector (East Carolina); Jim McLain, Shreveport (La.) Times (Louisiana Tech); Kevin Turbeville, Jonesboro (Ark.) Sun (Arkansas State); and Doug Zaleski, Muncie (Ind.) Evening Press (Northern Illinois).

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SCOUTING THE INDEPENDENTS

INDEPENDENTS

Ascending: Navy. Even though many Academy alums wanted coach Charlie Weatherbie fired last year after his ill-advised "go-for-the-throat" decision to run the ball on fourth-and-goal from the 1 against Army opened the door for the Cadets to pull out a 14-13 victory, the Middies are rising. Last year's five victories were the most since 1990, and better things lie ahead.

Descending: Central Florida. Welcome to Division I-AA, Golden Knights. UCF has been a strong I-AA program in the 1990s but will learn about life in the big-time during a four-week September road trip against I-A middleweights. Central Florida has plenty to offer a conference—location, weather, stadium (Citrus Bowl), expected growth—but for now, it has even more to offer its '96 opponents. Like a guaranteed victory.

Nightmare schedule: Northeast Louisiana. Even though the Indians finally get a "real" I-A team to visit Monroe (though given its recent performance, Minnesota's legitimacy can be questioned), they still must journey to UCLA, Arkansas, Mississippi State, Auburn and Cincinnati. Even games against four I-AA schools aren't layoffs. NLU lost to Troy State, Northwestern State and Central Florida last year—all at home.

Dream schedule: Army. Out are Washington, Notre Dame and Boston College. In are Ohio, North Texas, Yale and Tulane. The season hasn't started yet, but the Cadets already have chosen their MVP—athletic director Al Vanderbush.

Best matchup of the year: Notre Dame at USC, November 30. The Irish may be unbeaten in 13 consecutive games against the Trojans, but their visit to Los Angeles will be dangerous. This one could have the same national title implications as some of its storied predecessors.

Worst matchup of the year: Alabama-Birmingham at Auburn, August 31. The Blazers couldn't wait to get into Division I-A, and the Tigers were just as eager to welcome their in-state rivals to the ranks of the big-time so they could schedule them.

Bowl bound: Notre Dame should earn an Alliance bid again. East Carolina has the early line on a third consecutive trip to the Liberty Bowl, and Army's friendly schedule and wealth of skill performers give it an outside shot at an at-large bid.

Biggest shoes to fill: Notre Dame WR Derrick Mayes'. All Mayes did last year was establish Notre Dame career marks in receiving yards and touchdown receptions and allow the Irish to have a passing attack. Now, senior Emmett Mosley and a cast of young suspects must duplicate Mayes' efforts, or Notre Dame will be a one-dimensional team.

Most overrated player: Notre Dame QB Ron Powlus. For the second consecutive year, Powlus gets the honor, largely because he hasn't yet won a Heisman, led the Irish to a national championship or discovered a cure for AIDS.

Most underrated player: Northern Illinois RB Charles Talley. OK, so he

HONOR ROLL

Best offensive backfield:	Notre Dame.
Best wide receivers:	East Carolina.
Best offensive line:	Notre Dame.
Best defensive line:	Notre Dame.
Best linebackers:	Notre Dame.
Best secondary:	East Carolina.
Best special teams:	East Carolina.
Hardest hitter:	Lyon Cobbins, LB, Notre Dame.
Best backup quarterback:	Jarious Jackson, Notre Dame.
Best pro prospect:	Kory Minor, LB, Notre Dame.
Best game-day atmosphere:	Army.

RANKING THE RECRUITING

Top recruit in parentheses

1. Notre Dame (Best recruit: DL Jason Ching). The Irish landed their second straight excellent class and addressed speed needs at receiver and defensive back.
 2. East Carolina (DB Chris Satterfield).
 3. Alabama-Birmingham (QB Lee Jolly).
 4. Northeast Louisiana (DB Rodney McNeal).
 5. Central Florida (WR Kenny Clark).
 6. Arkansas State (OT Jason Sink).
 7. Northern Illinois (QB Brendan Doyle).
 8. Southwestern Louisiana (DT Tyrone Abrams).
 9. Louisiana Tech (WR Sean Cangelosi).
- (Army and Navy don't announce their incoming players.)

gained most of his 1,540 yards last year against porous Big West defenses. But Talley did rack up 146 yards and score on a 55-yard, first-quarter touchdown run against Florida. He gets to show his stuff against Maryland and Penn State this year.

Best coach: Notre Dame's Lou Holtz. Yes, he seemingly has had underachieving teams the past few seasons, and yes, he always talks up his opponent. But there may not be a better big-game coach in the nation.

Best staff: Notre Dame. Offensive coordinator Dave Roberts used to be a head coach, and defensive coordinator Bob Davie is destined to become one. Recruiting coordinator/tight end coach Bob Chmiel is the best in the business.

Coach on the hot seat: Holtz. Holtz joked that his new lifetime contract allows him to be "declared legally dead at any time." He had better get ND back in the national-title hunt, or the undertaker may start measuring him.

Best bets: East Carolina's Marcus Crandell will throw for at least 2,500 yards and top the 300-yard mark more than twice. He already is ahead of Bengals passer and former Pirates star Jeff Blake in career total offense and passing yardage. ... Army's potent option attack will again rank among the national leaders in rushing. ... Southwestern Louisiana quarterback Jake Delhomme will close his career as the school's passing king. ... Notre Dame will bludgeon some foe for 350-plus rushing yards. ... Central Florida sophomore quarterback Daunte Culpepper will dazzle some unsuspecting I-A defenses with his size and tremendous athletic ability.

Odds & ends: Northern Illinois will join the Mid-American Conference in 1997. The Huskies are MAC members in all other

PREDICTIONS

ALL-INDEPENDENT TEAM

OFFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
WR	CHAD MACKAY, Louisiana Tech	6-2/194	Sr.
WR	BRANDON STOKLEY, SW Louisi.	6-0/175	Soph.
TE	RON LESHINSKI, Army	6-3/240	Sr.
T	MIKE DOUGHTY, Notre Dame	6-8/313	Sr.
T	RON SUDDITH, East Carolina	6-2/297	Sr.
G	JEREMY AKERS, Notre Dame	6-6/300	Sr.
G	MIKE ROSENTHAL, Notre Dame	6-7/310	Soph.
C	RICK KACZENSKI, Notre Dame	6-4/264	Sr.
QB	MARCUS CRANDELL, E. Carolina	6-0/204	Sr.
RB	RANDY KINDER, Notre Dame	6-1/204	Sr.
RB	CHARLES TALLEY, N. Illinois	6-0/229	Sr.

DEFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
E	GARY JACKSON, Arkansas State	6-3/220	Sr.
T	PAUL CABLE, SW Louisiana	6-2/261	Sr.
T	LORENZO WEST, East Carolina	6-3/245	Sr.
E	RENALDO WYNN, Notre Dame	6-3/275	Sr.
LB	LYRON COBBINS, Notre Dame	6-0/246	Sr.
LB	KINNON TATUM, Notre Dame	6-0/224	Sr.
LB	KORY MINOR, Notre Dame	6-2/235	Soph.
CB	SEAN ANDREWS, Navy	5-10/176	Jr.
CB	ALLEN ROSSUM, Notre Dame	5-8/178	Jr.
S	DAREN HART, East Carolina	5-10/195	Sr.
S	CHAPPELL MITCHELL, Arkansas St.	5-10/170	Soph.

SPECIALISTS

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
K	MARTY KENT, Louisiana Tech	5-9/160	Jr.
P	CHARLIE PIERCE, Central Florida	6-1/180	Sr.
KR	COREY WALKER, Arkansas State	5-10/185	Sr.

PLAYERS OF THE YEAR



OFFENSE:

MARCUS CRANDELL
QB, East Carolina



DEFENSE:

KORY MINOR
LB, Notre Dame

TOP NEWCOMERS:

OFFENSIVE: Deke Cooper, WR, Notre Dame
DEFENSIVE: Brad Williams, DL, Notre Dame

sports. ... Northern Illinois quarterback Brandon Barker is Bubby Brister's nephew. ... It took action by the North Carolina legislature, but North Carolina and North Carolina State will begin playing East Carolina. The first game comes November 30, when the Pirates play the Wolfpack in new Carolinas Stadium in Charlotte.

—MICHAEL BRADLEY

A 2nd Cyclone whirlwind

Darren Davis, a 2,000-yard rusher in his own right, joins big brother Troy

By KEVIN DING

Late in the afternoon of a September day in 1995, Eular Webster heard the score—Iowa State 57, UNLV 30—and she knew her son, Troy, must have had another big game. But Mom didn't have time to find out the details. Her other son, Darren, was playing the biggest game of his final high school season that night.

So, she put on her lucky shirt—the bright red one with Darren's No. 3 and "Darren Davis is my son" emblazoned across the back—and headed for Miami Southridge High's game against fellow unbeaten Miami High. Darren had his usual big game, rushing for 171 yards, and he gave Southridge a 12-6 lead in the fourth quarter with a spectacular 37-yard touchdown run. But Miami High tied it and, with 55 seconds left in regulation, Darren tried to bring Southridge back.

Davis hit the hole hard, as always, but before he could rip through, the leg of a Miami High player whipped around and smashed against Davis' right shin—snapping his fibula and tibia on contact.

The thrilling day turned into a long night. At the hospital, Darren's mother finally pulled herself away from his side at 1 a.m. and called Troy in Ames, Iowa. She told him about the injury to his little brother, the brother Troy had considered almost a twin.

"I was so happy until she called me," said Troy, who had scored five touchdowns against UNLV and rushed for an Iowa State-record 302 yards. "And then all the happiness jumped out of me."

Darren Davis' season ended that day, September 23. Troy Davis went on to a scintillating year, becoming the first college sophomore to gain 2,000 yards and ending up fifth in the Heisman Trophy balloting. He said he played half of the rest of the year for his Iowa State teammates and the other half for Darren, but he still wished he could have done more for his brother.

Now he has the opportunity. Darren—whose recruitment-visit list included powers Miami and Florida State, as well as West Virginia, Kentucky and Iowa State—has joined Troy in Ames. The trip to Ames was by far the best for one telling reason: Troy's presence.

Darren generally was considered one of the top 10 running back prospects in the nation by most recruiting analysts before his senior season; indeed, he was a higher-rated high school recruit than Troy, who had been Iowa State's biggest catch in recent memory. Troy chose Iowa State because he figured he'd have more chances

to run the ball than at Miami or Florida State, the recruiting runners-up.

The brothers are the only two players in Dade County's rich high school football history to rush for more than 2,000 yards in a season. Now that Troy has attained 2,000 in college (2,010 last year), it seems natural for Darren to follow suit.

"It'll be just like at Southridge—I'll make my impact quick," Darren said. "I wanted to go somewhere and help build a program, and I wanted to play with my brother."

The brothers are like twins, just as Troy says. Both have squat, muscular physiques (5-8, 185 pounds). Both have good but not

seven of Southridge's 10 touchdowns. Troy dazzled with a 97-yard kickoff return; Darren topped that with a 99-yarder.

The leg healed, Darren promises he'll be 100 percent for his first college season. In fact, he wrestled for Southridge four months after suffering his injury and advanced to the state semifinals before losing to the eventual state champion.

Darren finds losing intolerable. While he lay injured on the field against Miami High, Darren asked his teammates to win for him—but his absence was stronger than



Darren Davis, whose senior prep season in Florida was curtailed by a nasty leg injury, is confident he'll be an impact player at Iowa State. Perhaps best of all, he'll be reunited with his much-acclaimed brother.

great speed (4.6 in the 40-yard dash) and succeed mostly on subtle moves and toughness.

The Cyclones will use the Davises much the way Southridge High did in 1993, with Troy gaining most of the yards and Darren lining up all over the field as a second potential game-breaker.

"Darren has a lot of the same ability, quickness, toughness, speed and power that Troy has," Iowa State coach Dan McCarney said. "I don't want Darren standing on the sidelines with me. We hope to have one of the best 1-2 tandems in college football."

The Davises were double trouble as prep players. In '93, Southridge went undefeated, won the state championship and finished No. 5 in *USA Today's* national rankings. In a 69-36 state title rout of powerhouse Bradenton Manatee, Troy and Darren combined for 508 all-purpose yards and scored

his inspiration. Southridge fell in overtime, losing for the first time in Dade County play with Darren Davis on its roster.

"That's the kind of kid he is—lying there with his leg broken and thinking he's letting the team down," Southridge coach Mark Guandolo said. "He's one of a kind."

Darren wouldn't mind being two of a kind at Iowa State. On the day he signed his letter-of-intent, he proudly wore a replica of Troy's No. 28 Cyclones jersey. And Troy, for his part, wouldn't mind sharing the spotlight with his little brother now and leaving it all up to him a little later.

"Ever since Darren was born, we've stuck together," Troy said. "He has always been following right behind me, and when I've done something, he has always come back and usually topped it." ♦

Kevin Ding is a sportswriter for the Miami Herald.

THE SPORTING NEWS PRIME PROSPECTS

The Sporting News asked five top recruiting "gurus" to provide lists of the top high school seniors at each position. We have compiled those rankings into one "master" list. The players are listed alphabetically by position. Check marks indicate that a player is considered one of the nation's best by that analyst. KEY: BB—Bill Buchalter; TL—Tom Lemming; GW—G&W Recruiting Service; CS—Collegiate Sports of America; NR—National Recruiting Advisor.

QUARTERBACKS	HL/WL	City/school	BB	TL	GW	CS	NR
Greg Cicero	6-4/180	Anaheim, Calif./Servite		✓	✓	✓	✓
Eric Crouch	6-1/185	Omaha, Neb./Millard North	✓				✓
Rohan Davey	6-2/200	Miami/Hialeah-Miami Lakes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lorenzo Guess	6-3/190	Wayne, Mich./Memorial			✓		✓
Kenny Kelly	6-2/180	Tampa/Catholic	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Zak Kustok	6-3/185	Orland Park, Ill./Carl Sandburg		✓	✓	✓	
Erik Lipton	6-4/200	Gambrells, Md./Arundel	✓				✓
Romaro Miller	6-2/190	Shannon, Miss./Shannon		✓	✓	✓	
Luke Richmond	6-4/212	Ansonia, Conn./Ansonia	✓	✓	✓		
Matt Schoebel	6-4/215	Columbus, Texas/Columbus		✓			✓
Edmond Stansbury	6-2/215	El Paso, Texas/Irvin	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
RUNNING BACKS	HL/WL	City/school	BB	TL	GW	CS	NR
Curtis Blandon	6-2/215	Danville, Ill./Danville		✓	✓		
Demontray Carter	5-9/180	Pensacola, Fla./Pensacola	✓	✓			✓
Adam Cox	6-1/210	Jasper, Ala./Walker			✓	✓	
Art Gipson	6-0/190	Fontana, Calif./Fontana	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Audrell Grace	5-11/170	Sylvania, Ga./Screven Co.	✓	✓			
Ron Johnson	5-11/210	Pine Bluff, Ark./Watson Chapel	✓	✓	✓		
Maxwell Joseph	6-0/215	Orlando/Oak Ridge	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Jamal Lewis	6-1/220	Atlanta/Douglass	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Darnell MacDonald	5-11/190	Englewood, Colo./Cherry Creek	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Brian Marshall	5-11/200	Bloomfield Hills, Mich./Brother Rice	✓		✓		
Hodges Mitchell	5-9/190	Dallas/Skyline	✓		✓		✓
James Mungro	5-11/185	E. Stroudsburg, Pa./East Stroudsburg	✓		✓		✓
Jason Murray	6-2/220	Belle Vernon, Pa./Belle Vernon Area		✓	✓		
Jasper Sanks	6-2/200	Columbus, Ga./Carver		✓	✓	✓	✓
Anthony Saunders	6-3/220	Greensboro, N.C./Western Guilford	✓			✓	✓
Jammar Sheppard	6-1/196	San Francisco/Sacred Heart	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Travis Stephens	5-11/175	Clarksville, Tenn./Northeast			✓	✓	✓
Anthony Thomas	6-2/220	Winnfield, La./Winnfield		✓		✓	
Levon Williams	6-3/185	Evansville, Ind./Bosse	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Antoine Womack	6-0/210	Hampton, Va./Phoebus	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dawayne Woods	5-9/180	Slidell, La./Salmen	✓		✓	✓	✓
WIDE RECEIVERS	HL/WL	City/school	BB	TL	GW	CS	NR
Bruce Branch	6-1/180	Richmond, Va./Huguenot	✓		✓	✓	✓
Ernest Brown	6-2/175	Huber Heights, Ohio/Wayne		✓	✓		
Reggie Germany	6-2/190	St. Louis/Hazelwood East	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Darrell Jackson	6-1/175	Tampa/Catholic	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Julius McMillan	5-11/170	Altus, Okla./Altus	✓	✓		✓	✓
Kenyon Rambo	6-1/180	Long Beach, Calif./Polytechnic	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Brian Scott	6-2/195	Darlington, S.C./Mayo	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Steve Shipp	6-2/185	Charlotte/West Charlotte	✓		✓		✓
Justin Taplin	6-2/195	Tempe, Ariz./Tempe	✓		✓	✓	✓
Reggie Wayne	6-1/175	Marrero, La./John Ehret		✓		✓	
Robert Williams	6-4/210	Dallas/Bishop Lynch	✓			✓	
TIGHT ENDS	HL/WL	City/school	BB	TL	GW	CS	NR
Marcus Bryson	6-4/235	Laurens, S.C./Laurens	✓			✓	
Joe Domingeaux	6-5/225	Crowley, La./Crowley		✓			✓
Antoine Harris	6-4/230	Los Angeles/Loyola	✓		✓		✓
Chad Irwin	6-4/245	Baytown, Texas/Lee	✓		✓		
Alvin Morrow	6-5/240	St. Louis/Kirkwood		✓			✓
OFFENSIVE LINE	HL/WL	City/school	BB	TL	GW	CS	NR
Jake Bisson	6-6/285	Upper St. Clair, Pa./Upper St. Clair	✓		✓		✓
Jason Brooks	6-4/270	Cleveland/St. Ignatius	✓		✓	✓	
Leonard Davis	6-6/320	Wortham, Texas/Wortham	✓		✓	✓	
Nic Hawkins	6-5/305	Visalia, Calif./Mt. Whitney	✓		✓		✓
Josh Jakubowski	6-6/318	Schofield, Wis./D.C. Everest	✓			✓	
Ben Mast	6-4/285	Massillon, Ohio/Washington			✓	✓	
Kareem McKenzie	6-6/310	Willingboro, N.J./Willingboro	✓		✓		
Terrance Metcalf	6-4/288	Clarksdale, Miss./Clarksdale	✓		✓	✓	✓
Josh Mitchell	6-5/283	Buckingham, Pa./Central Bucks East			✓	✓	✓
Andre Pittman	6-4/300	Houston/Lamar			✓	✓	✓
Brian Polak	6-5/305	La Puente, Calif./Bishop Amat	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Greg Ransom	6-4/285	Hamburg, N.J./Walkill Valley	✓		✓		
Victor Rogers	6-7/280	Federal Way, Wash./Decatur	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Jon Ryder	6-5/295	Perrysburg, Ohio/Perrysburg	✓		✓	✓	
Mike Souza	6-6/265	Honolulu/Punahou School	✓			✓	
Fred Weary	6-3/250	Montgomery, Ala./Lee			✓	✓	
Maurice Williams	6-6/280	Detroit/Pershing	✓				✓

DEFENSIVE LINE	HL/WL	City/school	BB	TL	GW	CS	NR
Robert Bernard	6-3/265	Houston/Sterling		✓	✓		
Derrick Burns	6-5/275	Eden Prairie, Minn./Eden Prairie			✓	✓	
Andre Carter	6-4/230	San Jose, Calif./Oak Grove			✓	✓	
Cosey Coleman	6-5/300	Tucker, Ga./Tucker	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dorsett Davis	6-6/275	Cleveland, Miss./East Side			✓	✓	
Char-ron Dorsey	6-6/300	Jacksonville/The Bolles School	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Aaron Haberman	6-4/260	Hartland, Wis./Arrowhead	✓		✓	✓	
Roderick Kelly	6-5/260	Houston/Yates	✓	✓	✓		
Gunther Kryson	6-5/250	Clark, N.J./A.L. Johnson Regional	✓				✓
Brian Kula	6-4/275	Phoenix/Brophy Prep	✓		✓		
Sam Matthews	6-6/270	Jacksonville/The Bolles School	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Thomas Pittman	6-4/260	Reserve, La./East Saint John			✓	✓	✓
Jamal Reynolds	6-4/230	Aiken, S.C./Aiken	✓		✓		
Melvin Richey	6-4/292	Decatur, Ga./SW DeKalb		✓	✓	✓	
Tyrone Robertson	6-4/260	Danville, Va./George Washington	✓		✓	✓	
Willie Sams	6-5/265	Bradenton, Fla./Southeast	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kenny Smith	6-4/285	Meridian, Miss./Meridian	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hubert Thompson	6-6/255	Hillside, Ill./Proviso West	✓	✓			✓
David Warren	6-5/225	Tyler, Texas/John Tyler	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Gerard Warren	6-5/290	Lake Butler, Fla./Union Co.	✓	✓			
Denard Whitfield	6-4/215	Denison, Texas/Denison			✓	✓	
LINEBACKERS	HL/WL	City/school	BB	TL	GW	CS	NR
Roylin Bradley	6-2/220	La Marque, Texas/La Marque	✓		✓		✓
Darrell Daniels	6-2/210	San Fernando, Calif./San Fernando			✓	✓	
Kelvin Dansby	6-3/215	Birmingham, Ala./Ensley	✓	✓	✓		
Andra Davis	6-3/220	Live Oak, Fla./Suwannee Co.			✓	✓	
Jason Frysinger	6-4/220	Grosse Ile, Mich./Grosse Ile	✓			✓	✓
Ron Graham	6-4/230	Pittsburgh/Penn Hills	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Barris Grant	6-2/235	Irvington, N.J./Irvington			✓	✓	✓
Grant Irons	6-5/220	The Woodlands, Texas/McCullough	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Harold Jackson	6-2/235	Wilkes-Barre, Pa./G-A-R Memorial	✓		✓		✓
DeAngelo Lloyd	6-6/225	Charlotte/Independence	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Zeke Moreno	6-3/225	Castle Park, Calif./Chula Vista	✓	✓	✓		
Jason Ott	6-3/245	Cincinnati/Elder	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tim Shear	6-2/215	Junction City, Ore./Junction City	✓		✓		
Kyle VandenBosch	6-4/240	Inwood, Iowa/West Lyon		✓		✓	✓
DEFENSIVE BACKS	HL/WL	City/school	BB	TL	GW	CS	NR
Mike Clinkscale	6-1/190	Youngstown, Ohio/Chaney	✓			✓	
Tony Driver	6-3/210	Louisville, Ky./Male	✓	✓	✓		
Derrick Gibson	6-2/185	Miami/Killian	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Deon Grant	6-3/195	Augusta, Ga./Josey	✓		✓	✓	✓
Chris Lewis	5-10/175	Dallas/Carter			✓	✓	
John Norman	6-4/190	Midland, Texas/Lee	✓			✓	✓
Ife Olafete	6-2/200	Los Alamitos, Calif./Los Alamitos			✓	✓	✓
Eric Parker	6-1/165	Joliet, Ill./Joliet Township	✓		✓		✓
Sean Penny	6-2/215	Youngstown, Ohio/Ursuline		✓	✓	✓	✓
Stanford Simmons	6-2/195	Ashland, Ala./Clay County			✓	✓	✓
Marques Tuiasosopo	6-2/210	Woodinville, Wash./Woodinville	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Joe Walker	6-1/180	Galena, Texas/North Shore	✓			✓	
Tony Walker	6-2/180	Lancaster, Calif./Antelope Valley	✓		✓		
KICKERS	HL/WL	City/school	BB	TL	GW	CS	NR
Toby Shears	6-1/165	Leadville, Colo./Lake Co.		✓			✓
ATHLETES	HL/WL	City/school	BB	TL	GW	CS	NR
Lavar Arrington	6-4/220	Pittsburgh/North Hills	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tyree Foreman	6-1/205	Sandy Spring, Md./Sherwood	✓	✓			
Peter Harris	5-11/180	Brockton, Mass./Brockton		✓	✓		
Ryan Humphrey	6-7/225	Tulsa, Okla./B.T. Washington	✓		✓		✓
Ty Hunt	6-6/230	Hickory, N.C./Hickory	✓		✓		
Yubrenal Isabelle	6-2/220	Bluefield, W.Va./Bluefield			✓		
Robert Jackson	6-1/190	Corvallis, Ore./Crescent Valley				✓	✓
Opoku Johnson	6-1/175	Brookhaven, N.Y./Bellport	✓		✓		✓
Mycal Jones	6-0/175	Jeannette, Pa./Jeannette	✓		✓		
Austin Kemp	6-4/215	Brentwood, Tenn./Brentwood Academy		✓		✓	
Austin Lee	6-4/240	Post Falls, Idaho/Post Falls	✓				✓
Maleafou McKenzie	6-0/200	Mission Viejo, Calif./Capistrano Valley				✓	✓
Travis Minor	6-1/190	Baton Rouge, La./Catholic	✓		✓	✓	
Rodney Perry	6-0/185	Santa Ana, Calif./Mater Dei		✓	✓	✓	✓
Chris Ramseur	6-1/202	Maiden, N.C./Maiden	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

OTHERS RECEIVING VOTES

BILL BUCHALTER: Monty Beisel, FB/LB, 6-4/220, Victoria, Kan./Victoria; Kyle Benn, DL, 6-4/285, Bellevue, Wash./Bellevue; Mike Dolezel, LB, 6-3/215, Mahtomedi, Minn./Mahtomedi; Rashad Drayton, LB, 6-2/212, Newton, Mass./North; Nick Gralla, DL, 6-7/272, East Rutherford, N.J./Becton Regional; Carlos Honors, RB, 5-11/180, Iowa City, Iowa/West; Eric Jondro, LB, 6-3/215, Foxboro, Mass./Foxboro; Dennis Jones, OL, 6-7/250, Dallas/Spruce; Cody Joyce, WR, 6-4/190, Newhall, Calif./Hart; Darnell Sanders, WR, 6-5/215, Warrensville Heights, Ohio/Warrensville Heights; T.J. Turner, LB, 6-3/235, Hillsboro, Ohio/Hillsboro; Ryan Wingrove, TE, 6-4/245, Parkersburg, W.Va./Parkersburg; Tracy Wistrom, LB, 6-4/200, Webb City, Mo./Webb City.

TOM LEMMING: Braxton Anderson, DL, 6-7/265, Franklin, Ky./Simpson; Ravon Anderson, RB, 5-11/190, Hoboken, N.J./Hoboken; Russell Bonner, DB, 6-3/180, Gaffney, S.C./Gaffney; Rufus Brown, RB, 6-1/200, Belzoni, Miss./Humphreys Co.; Luke Butkus, OL, 6-4/260, Chicago Heights, Ill./Bloom; Zimbalist Carter, DB, 6-1/175, Riverside, Calif./Poly; Lakenji Cooper, DB, 5-10/175, Largo, Fla./Largo; Dave Cope, LB, 6-3/230, Mays Landing, N.J./Oak Crest; Robbie Crockett, ATH, 6-0/195, Battle Creek, Mich./Central; Derrick Curry, DL, 6-5/265, Houston/Jones; Woodrow Dantzler, QB, 6-1/190, Orangeburg, S.C./Wilson; Tyres Dickson, DB, 6-2/175, Houston/Scarborough; Tony Dixon, DB, 6-2/190, Reform, Ala./Pickens Co.; Doug Ginapp, WR, 6-4/245, Arlington, Texas/Houston; Mitch Grizzard, TE, 6-7/230, Ayden, N.C./Grifton; Jason Hopewell, DL, 6-6/250, Highland, N.J./Highland; Andre Hutson, QB, 6-8/205, Trotwood, Ohio/Madison; Robert Jefferson, OL, 6-8/300, Omaha, Neb./Central; Derek Lagway, RB, 6-2/215, Willis, Texas/Willis; Ronte Langs, ATH, 5-9/175, Memphis, Tenn./Whitehaven; Todd Massa, DL, 6-4/295, Darien, Conn./Darien; Manny Norris, OL, 6-5/335, Sharon, Pa./Sharon; Brandon Rauh, K, 5-9/175, Dublin, Ohio/Scioto; Casey Robin, OL, 6-6/280, Covington, La./St. Paul's; Jace Saylor, TE, 6-5/255, McHenry, Ill./McHenry; Jim Sjurski, K, 5-10/165, Seattle/O'Dea; Demetrius Smith, DL, 6-2/270, Oak Lawn, Ill./Richards; Charles Sharp, QB, 5-9/175, Mountain View, Calif./St. Francis; Robert Wallace, OL, 6-4/285, Euless, Texas/Trinity; Charles Williams, DB, 6-2/205, Cleburne, Texas/Cleburne; Scott Williams, DL, 6-5/235, Chesterfield, Va./Bird; Travis Zachary, ATH, 6-1/170, Marietta, Ga./Marietta.

G&W: Tommy Banks, RB, 6-2/225, West Monroe, La./West Monroe; Muskingum Barnes, DL, 6-2/245, Moss Point, Miss./Moss Point; Idi Beard, RB, 6-0/185, Flint, Mich./Northern; Abram Booty, 6-2/175, WR, Shreveport, La./Evangel Academy; James Boyd, ATH, 6-1/190, Chesapeake, Va./Indian River; Jordan Caruso, OL, 6-5/295, Medford, N.J./Shawnee; Daniel Cobb, QB, 6-4/195, Kennesaw, Ga./Harrison; Monte Henderson, DB, 5-10/180, Conway, Ark./Conway; Teddy Johnson, WR, 6-1/180, Elgin, Ill./Larkin; Jermese Jones, OL, 6-7/275, Durham, N.C./Hillside; Nate Krill, TE, 6-7/245, McLean, Va./McLean; Randy Lawrence, LB, 6-2/220, Titusville, Fla./Astronaut; Luke Nichols, OL, 6-5/290, Beaumont, Texas/Kelly; Cooper Rego, RB, 5-9/185, Montvale, N.J./St. Joseph's; Larry Sanders, OL, 6-5/295, Alexandria, La./Boltan; Anthony Welch, DL, 6-5/320, Syracuse, N.Y./Corcoran; Ed Wilder, ATH, 6-3/245, Washington, Ga./Wilkes Co.; Kelcey Williams, RB, 6-1/210, Humboldt, Tenn.

CSA: Cortez Allen, LB, 6-1/225, Decatur, Ga./SW DeKalb; Darryl Bright, DL, 6-5/230, Tulsa, Okla./B.T. Washington; Chris Brooks, TE, 6-4/235, Newton, Texas/Newton; Brad Cochran, RB, 6-1/205, River Ridge, La./John Curtis; Jason Glenn, DB, 6-2/200, Aldine, Texas/Nimitz; Kenyon Hambrick, WR, 6-2/170, Huntsville, Ala./Johnson; DeCourcey Hampton, OL, 6-7/305, Memphis, Tenn./Westwood; Chris Harris, WR, 6-2/200, Bedford, Mass./Bedford; Ron Headon, DL, 6-5/280, Camden, N.J./Wilson; Jerome Hildreth, OL, 6-6/290, Chicago, Ill./Marshall; Darion Hutcherson, LB, 6-1/210, Atlanta/Douglass; Jamil Jacobs, WR, 5-11/160, Teaneck, N.J./Teaneck; Fred Journey, RB, 6-0/180, Garland, Texas/Lakeview Central; DeAndre Lewis, RB, 5-9/180, Aldine, Texas/Aldine; Dwight Majette, TE, 6-3/225, New Bedford, Mass./New Bedford; Joe Major, OL, 6-4/290, Redmond, Wash./Redmond; J.J. Mathis, DB, 6-0/185, Pampa, Texas/Pampa; Tim McGowan, OL, 6-7/285, Toms River, N.J./North; Todd Mortensen, QB, 6-4/200, Tempe, Ariz./Tempe; Autuan Simmons, DB, 5-11/185, Sacramento, Calif./Valley; Mel Spicer, DE/LB, 6-4/230, Newark, N.J./Newark; Adrian Wilson, DL, 6-4/295, Dallas/Carter; Nate Wright Jr., ATH, 5-10/175, San Diego/Point Loma.

NATIONAL RECRUITING ADVISOR: Herman Banks, WR, 6-2/170, Hartselle, Ala.; Courtney Bullard, LB, 6-3/210, Miami/Southridge; Joseph Burton, OL, 6-5/275, Greenwich, Conn.; Charlie Campbell, WR, 6-2/170, Youngstown, Ohio/Liberty; Chris Chambers, WR, 6-3/170, Bedford, Ohio; Randy Fasani, QB, 6-3/210, Loomis, Calif./Del Oro; Corey Ferguson, RB, 6-0/190, Union, N.J.; Pernell Griffin, LB, 6-3/220, Williamston, N.C.; Zak Haselmo, K, 6-1/180, Lompoc, Calif./Cabrillo; Reggie Hayward, LB, 6-5/225, Dalton, Ill./Thorndike; Derrick Johnson, LB, 5-10/235, Pine Bluff, Ark.; Shalando Jones, WR, 6-2/183, Pontotoc, Miss.; Tito Lee, LB, 6-0/215, Brentwood, Tenn./Academy; J.R. Mounts, RB, 5-11/205, Key West, Fla./Key West; Enoch Mpo, DB, 5-10/175, Olathe, Kan./North; William Norwood, DB, 6-4/195, Inglewood, N.J.; Tim Olmstead, QB, 6-4/195, Woodberry, Va./Forrest; Lucas Phillips, QB, 6-3/185, Baltimore/Mt. St. Joseph's; Michael Pollard, LB, 6-1/215, Long Beach, Calif./Polytechnic; Kerry Sternke, K, 6-0/180, Green Bay, Wis./Preble; Chris Stevens, TE, 6-6/245, Logan, Utah; Antoneyo Williams, RB, 6-0/200, Tuscaloosa, Ala./Central; Ralph Zarate, OL, 6-5/265, Tucson, Ariz.

WHERE CONSENSUS TOP 50 SIGNED

RK.	PLAYER	POS.	HT./WT.	TOWN/HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE CHOICE
1.	Tim Couch	QB	6-5/210	Hyden, Ky./Leslie Co.	Kentucky
2.	Damione Lewis	DL	6-4/250	Sulphur Springs, Texas/Sulphur Springs	Miami
3.	Patrick Pass	RB	6-0/207	Tucker, Ga./Tucker	Georgia
4.	Dwayne Goodrich	DB	6-0/177	Oak Lawn, Ill./Richards	Tennessee
5.	Odell James	QB	6-4/205	Aldine, Texas/MacArthur	Baylor
6.	Eric Jefferson	DL	6-4/255	Shreveport, La./Evangel Christian	Illinois
7.	Rufus French	TE	6-5/229	Amory, Miss./Amory	Mississippi
8.	Travis Claridge	OL	6-6/295	Vancouver, Wash./Fort Vancouver	USC
9.	Rashard Casey	QB	6-3/190	Hoboken, N.J./Hoboken	Penn State
10.	Ron Dayne	FB	5-11/255	Pine Hill, N.J./Overbrook	Wisconsin
11.	Andy Katzenmoyer	LB	6-4/240	Westerville, Ohio/South	Ohio State
12.	Courtney Brown	DE	6-6/235	Moncks Corner, S.C./Macedonia	Penn State
13.	LaCorey Collins	WR	6-4/208	Oakland/Skyline	Oregon
14.	Quincy Carter	QB	6-3/200	Decatur, Ga./SW DeKalb	Georgia Tech
15.	Jefferson Kelley	OL	6-5/300	Cincinnati/Colerain	Ohio State
16.	Jason Ching	DL	6-4/265	Honolulu/Punahou	Notre Dame
17.	Chris Claiborne	LB	6-3/225	Riverside, Calif./North	USC
18.	Joe Dawkins	ATH	5-9/180	Hackensack, N.J./Hackensack	Penn State
19.	Titcus Pettigrew	WR	6-2/194	Clemons, N.C./West Forsyth	Penn State
20.	Nate Webster	LB	6-0/218	Miami/Northwestern	Miami
21.	Tommy Hendricks	DB	6-2/205	Aldine, Texas/Eisenhower	Michigan
22.	Mike Burden	DB	6-1/210	Palatine, Ill./Palatine	Ohio State
23.	Alcander Jackson	OL	6-4/315	Moss Point, Miss./Moss Point	LSU
24.	Shaun Ellis	DE	6-5/230	Anderson, S.C./Westside	Tennessee
25.	Jesse Warren	DL	6-5/255	Dallas/Carter	Colorado
26.	Ralph Brown	DB	5-11/180	LaPuente, Calif./Bishop Amat	Nebraska
27.	Champ Bailey	DB	6-1/171	Folkston, Ga./Charlton Co.	Georgia
28.	Buck Gurley	DE	6-4/236	Tallahassee, Fla./Godby	Florida
29.	Plaxico Burress	WR	6-6/210	Virginia Beach, Va./Green Run	Michigan State
30.	DeAngelo Evans	RB	5-9/210	Wichita, Kan./Collegiate	Nebraska
31.	Sedrick Irvin	FB	6-0/210	Miami/Miami High	Michigan State
32.	Daymon Carroll	RB	5-11/182	Norristown, Pa./Norristown	Florida
33.	Brandon Spoon	LB	6-3/225	Burlington, N.C./Williams	North Carolina
34.	Quincy Hipps	DE	6-4/240	Tampa/Tampa Catholic	Miami
35.	George Guidry	LB	6-3/225	Lake Charles, La./Marion	Nebraska
36.	Jamie Carter	DL	6-4/280	Philadelphia, Miss./Neshoba Central	Alabama
37.	Laveraneus Coles	RB	6-0/192	Jacksonville, Fla./Ribault	Florida State
38.	Brad Williams	DL	6-5/255	Santa Ana, Calif./Mater Dei	Notre Dame
39.	Gary Berry	DB	6-0/205	Columbus, Ohio/DeSales	Ohio State
40.	Kenneth Smith	DL	6-7/260	Stevenson, Ala./North Jackson	Alabama
41.	Stan Guyness	WR	6-2/185	Los Alamitos, Calif./Los Alamitos	USC
42.	Derrion Yates	DE	6-6/240	Houston/Washington	LSU
43.	Mike Brown	DB	5-11/190	Scottsdale, Ariz./Saguaro	Nebraska
44.	Cecil Collins	RB	5-10/198	Leesville, La./Leesville	LSU
45.	Jeff Backus	OL	6-6/260	Norcross, Ga./Norcross	Michigan
46.	Jason Kapsner	QB	6-5/210	Eden Prairie, Minn./Eden Prairie	Michigan
47.	Tyson Wilson	ATH	6-0/208	Dallas/Kimball	Baylor
48.	Vernon Maxwell	RB	6-3/195	Midwest City, Okla./Midwest City	Tennessee
49.	Kenneth Davis	WR	6-0/185	Houston/Washington	Houston
50.	Michael Wiley	RB	6-0/182	Spring Valley, Calif./Monte Vista	Ohio State

ABOUT THE 'GURUS'...

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TOP CLASSES

1. OHIO STATE
2. USC
3. PENN STATE
4. FLORIDA STATE
5. TENNESSEE
6. LSU
7. NOTRE DAME
8. NEBRASKA
9. FLORIDA
10. MICHIGAN

RECRUITING NOTEBOOK

LOOKING BACK, THEN AHEAD

There's no question that quarterback Tim Couch, of little Hyden, Ky. (pop.: about 400), was considered the top prospect in last year's senior class.

There are a number of reason Couch was such a big recruit. He has good size (6-5, 210). He set all sorts of passing records. And—possibly the biggest reason—he plays the most important position.

His detractors—and there are a few—point out that Couch's big numbers were piled up against less-than-sterling competition. At the same time, he has the build and (supposedly) the wherewithal to become a super college quarterback. His decision to attend Kentucky surprised some, given the Wildcats' recent struggles, both overall and on offense. Still, expect to see Couch behind center from Day One.

There is no consensus No. 1 recruit in this year's class—not yet, anyway. A couple of players who look as if they have the right stuff to be the top prep are Lavar Arrington, a running back/linebacker from Pittsburgh's North Hills High, and defensive end David Warren, a pass-rushing terror from Tyler (Texas) John Tyler High.

Some others to watch for:

- Edmund Stansbury, a quarterback from El Paso (Texas) Irvin. Stansbury is a superb athlete who is the state discus champion. He may not necessarily be a quarterback in college.

- Darnell McDonald, a running back from Englewood (Colo.) Cherry Creek who may play pro baseball instead of college football.

- Travis Minor, a running back from Baton Rouge (La.) Catholic. Minor reminds some observers of Warrick Dunn. Minor is about Dunn's size, runs track like Dunn and attends the same high school.

- Tony Driver, a defensive back/running back from Male High in Louisville, Ky.

- Brian Scott, a wide receiver from Darlington (S.C.) Mayo. Scott also is an all-state basketball player.

- Kenny Kelly, a quarterback from Tampa Catholic. Kelly also starts for Tampa Catholic's basketball and baseball teams.

WHERE HAVE I HEARD THAT NAME BEFORE?

A number of this year's top recruits have names that college football fans should be familiar with. For example:

- Kelvin Dansby, a linebacker from Birmingham (Ala.) Ensley, is the brother of Notre Dame defensive end Melvin Dansby.

- Grant Irons, a linebacker from McCullough High in The Woodlands, Texas, is the brother of Michigan linebacker Jarrett Irons.

- Abram Booty, a wide receiver from Evangel Christian Academy in Shreveport, La., is the brother of Florida Marlins farm-

hand Josh Booty, who was considered the No. 1 high school football player in some circles in 1993.

- Tracy Wistrom, a linebacker from Webb City, Mo., is the brother of Nebraska defensive end Grant Wistrom.

And while Kenyon Rambo (Long Beach, Calif.) and Yubrenal Isabelle (Bluefield, W.Va.) aren't necessarily related to anybody famous, we simply like their names and think they should be mentioned.

HERE, THEN THERE

In last year's College Football Yearbook, we detailed the Chris Redman saga. Redman is the former hotshot high school quarterback from Louisville, Ky., who originally signed with Illinois in February 1995. But shortly after national signing day, the Illini fired assistant coach Greg Landry, who had been instrumental in recruiting Redman. When that happened, Redman was granted a release from his scholarship. He then signed with Oklahoma, whose then-coach, Howard Schnellenberger, had heavily recruited Redman while he was coach at Louisville.

That's where our story ended. But not Redman's. In late July 1995, Redman decided he didn't want to play for Oklahoma after all. Redman then opted to attend Louisville—the school to which he originally orally committed. Redman, who was the *Parade* magazine high school player of the year for 1994, heads into the season as the Cardinals' backup quarterback as a red-shirt freshman.

TOUGHENING UP

A change in the academic standards for this year's incoming college freshmen made it more difficult for some to gain freshman eligibility.

In the past, a 2.0 grade-point average and a 700 SAT score (or a 17 ACT) meant freshman eligibility for student/athletes. No more. Instead, there is a "sliding scale" for full qualifier status that calls for a 900 SAT (or 21 ACT) if there is a 2.0 high school GPA; if there is a 700 SAT, there needs to be a 2.50 GPA.

There also is something known as a "partial qualifier." Usually, in these cases, a student/athlete has a high GPA but not a high enough test score. Generally, most conferences allow each school to take only one partial qualifier per year. This rule especially affected schools from the old Big Eight. In the past, most of the Big Eight schools were allowed to take non-qualifiers (for instance, Nebraska had four former Prop 48s in its starting lineup in the Fiesta Bowl). Now, in the new Big 12, the schools are limited to one partial qualifier.

NOT NOW

Occasionally, you hear stories about football players signing with certain schools because they'll also get a chance to play

basketball. It's rare, though, when a football player decides on a school because of the basketball coach.

It happened to Southern California this year. Linebacker Na'il Diggs, generally considered one of the top 25 or so linebackers in the nation, was all set to become a Trojan until the school fired basketball coach Charlie Parker on February 7, which happened to be national signing day. The reason: Diggs is Parker's brother-in-law.

Diggs' sister had dropped off Diggs' binding letter-of-intent at the USC football office. But a few minutes later, she retrieved it when she heard her husband had been fired. Diggs, a 6-4, 225-pounder from Los Angeles' Dorsey High, later signed with Ohio State.

Diggs said Parker's firing "didn't eliminate USC from the running," but it did play a role in his decision.

MERRY-GO-ROUND

OK, see if you can follow this:

Highly touted quarterback Tee Martin of Mobile (Ala.) Williamson orally commits to Auburn. Martin then visits Tennessee—and commits to the Vols. Wait—there's more. Martin then "decommits" to Tennessee and reaffirms that he will sign with Auburn. So where does he sign? Tennessee, of course.

His was not an isolated case.

Highly recruited defensive end Derrick Chambers, from Lawndale (N.C.) Burns High, committed to Florida in early September. But as the season progressed, Chambers took more recruiting visits and decommitted, announcing he would attend Tennessee. But on signing day, Chambers signed with Florida. And there's the saga of another highly recruited youngster from the Southeast, Quitman (Ga.) Brooks County defensive lineman Marcus Stroud. Stroud committed to Florida in early January. Then, two days before signing day, on February 5, Stroud said he had changed his mind and would sign with Georgia. Then, he changed his mind again on February 6, announcing he would become a Gator. On February 7, Stroud signed with Georgia.

Observers say the '96 recruiting "season" was an especially sticky one in terms of decommitments. Because the talent pool is shrinking with the toughened academic standards, more schools are going after the same players—and not giving up even after a recruit commits.

Some other notable decommitments: Miami High FB Sedrick Irvin from Tennessee to Michigan State; Houston Nimitz RB Dante Hall from Illinois to Missouri to Texas A&M; New Iberia (La.) High RB/DB Marc Roman from LSU to Mississippi State to LSU; Sylmar (Calif.) High RB Durell Price from Ohio State to UCLA; and Oak Lawn (Ill.) Richards DL Jim Jones from Illinois to Notre Dame.

—MIKE HUGENIN

Scouting Division I-AA

Realignment near? Leap to I-A seldom a jump for joy

By CARL DUBOIS

Central Florida, Boise State, Idaho and Alabama-Birmingham are doing it this season. Marshall is doing it next year. Middle Tennessee State and Buffalo plan to do it before 2000.

UMass, UConn and Villanova have talked about it. Ditto Youngstown State, Georgia Southern and a dozen others who dream of life in the big-time.

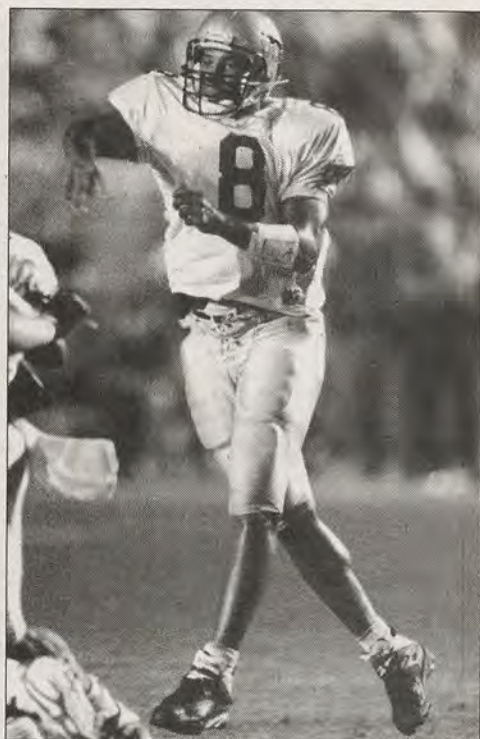
We're talking about making the jump from Division I-AA to I-A. Before this fall, seven teams had made the leap, five from the Southland Conference. Four had played in a I-AA championship game; one (Northeast Louisiana) won it all. But most have struggled in I-A. Those who have won have not done so at the expense of major I-A teams.

"Those who have made the decision (to join I-A) obviously believe there are benefits, whether monetary or in perception, or they're interested because of alumni influence or because of the area of the country they're in," said Dennis Poppe, the NCAA director of championships in I-AA. "In the old days, getting a part of the TV contract was a factor, but that's no longer there."

Dividing a division

With many of the top teams leaving or planning to leave I-AA, the division isn't what it used to be. Still, the gap between the perennial playoff teams and the non-scholarship programs is huge. Many coaches think realignment is inevitable.

When Dayton cracked The Sports Network Top 25 last season after a 6-0 start, the top coaches in I-AA scoffed, noting the lack of a postseason tradition in the Pioneer Football League. When Siena's



Marshall and tight end Jermaine Wiggins (left) will reach out to I-A in 1997, a status that Central Florida and quarterback Daunte Culpepper will attain this season.

Nevada, which joined I-A in 1992, played four former I-As last season plus a school that went on to drop football (Pacific). Northeast Louisiana's leap year, 1994, featured a 70-6 loss at Georgia and just four home games. Defensive players from Southwestern Louisiana, a 1982 graduate of I-AA, appear in an unflattering light on much of the Heisman-highlight video of former Auburn running back Bo Jackson.

The desire to play with the big boys—despite the reality check that awaits—has more and more programs pondering the jump, and that's just one of the dynamics reshaping the diverse I-AA landscape.

Not all schools wait for sustained success in I-AA before wanting to reclassify. Buffalo and UAB barely had their feet wet in I-AA before they made plans to move up. But most I-A hopefuls come from the cream of I-AA. Marshall has been to the national championship game four of the past five years. Youngstown State won three titles in four years, losing only to Marshall in the 1992 finals. Georgia Southern won four titles from 1985-90. Boise State reached the finals in 1994, its first trip since it won it all in 1980.

Reggie Greene led I-AA in rushing and all-purpose yards last season, critics pointed to the quality of competition in the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference.

Many of the teams in I-AA are Division III programs dressed in I-AA clothing, thanks to an NCAA rule mandating Division I status in football in order to protect Division I status in other sports. Programs such as Georgetown, Siena, Wofford and Buffalo, just to name a few, either don't award football scholarships or can't fund the I-AA maximum of 63. Siena even dropped the sport in January, only to reverse itself less than a month later. The school planned to hire its first full-time head coach by June 1.

Other I-As, such as Cal State Sacramento and Western Kentucky, have toyed with eliminating football. Others, such as Morehead State, are moving toward need-based scholarships.

Now that the NCAA has restructured the way legislation is passed, putting each division in control of its destiny, most observers think it's only a matter of time before there is a major shakeup of the divisions. The most discussed scenario involves the I-A powers booting out the bottom 20-25 teams, who then might join

the upper crust of I-AA to form a new division. Then, the smaller I-AAs and the Division II schools could align in a division of few or no scholarships.

Washington State president Sam Smith, chair of the NCAA Presidents Commission, said in April that a decision on the future of the bowls and a possible I-A playoff should come within 18 months. That decision will probably influence realignment as much as anything else.

"Everything right now is purely speculation," the NCAA's Poppe said. "The transition teams are just beginning to talk. Ultimately, I believe those schools that have the opportunity to share the same philosophies will be in the same division."

That's why few I-AA coaches will go on record criticizing another school's jump to I-A, however misguided the move seems. In a few years, they might be on the same playing field again, and coaches feel there's already enough bulletin-board material without creating more.

Happy to be here

Northern Iowa coach Terry Allen has been a part of every game—as a player, graduate assistant coach, assistant and coach—in the school's UNI-Dome since it opened in 1976. That streak, and Allen's life, survived a close call during a recruiting trip in January.

Allen, assistant Wes Anderson and pilot Mike O'Connor were returning by single-engine plane to Cedar Falls, Iowa, after a visit to the home of Lamar Henderson, a wide receiver from Detroit. Because of a strong head wind that caused a miscalculation of the amount of fuel needed, Allen said, the plane's two gas tanks ran dry about five miles from the airport in Independence, which is about 23 miles east of the Waterloo airport near Cedar Falls, where the plane was headed.

With the propeller no longer turning and the plane at 4,000 feet, O'Connor scrapped the flight plan and glided the four-seat plane toward the runway in Independence. He came up a quarter-mile shy and landed in a corn field. The only casualty: the landing gear, which was damaged when the plane hit a fence.

"We skidded across the snow, and because it was at night and it was a new moon, we had no idea what was out there," Allen said. "We slowed to about 25-30 mph and hit the barbed-wire fence and wrapped it around the plane. Then we all got out and stood in the cold."

In a year of high-profile single-engine plane crashes, including those that claimed the lives of former Nebraska quarterback Brook Berringer and 7-year-old Jessica Dubroff in April, Allen considers himself lucky to be returning for his eighth season as the Panthers' coach.

"Your life is right in front of you in that situation," Allen said. "When that propeller stops turning, it scares the (expletive) out of you."

"I think about us when I hear about a plane going down. We cleared a ravine in a river by about a half-mile. Otherwise, we wouldn't be having this conversation."

Three days later, Allen got back on a plane and continued recruiting. In the spring, he got the perfect footnote to his safe landing: Henderson signed with Northern Iowa.

Men of steal

You don't tug on Superman's cape—unless you're Princeton junior defensive backs Damani Leech and Tom Ludwig. Leech has 10 career interceptions, Ludwig nine. With two full seasons left, each could threaten the school record of 22 set by Dean Cain, who plays the Man of Steel on television's *Lois & Clark: The New Adventures of Superman*.

Cain picked off 22 passes in 30 games for an average of 0.7 per game. His 12 interceptions in 1987 are a I-AA season record.

In demand

These I-AA coaches, some of whom already have been courted, will be on a few I-A teams' shopping lists in the next few years:

Terry Allen, Northern Iowa
Larry Blakeney, Troy State
Bobby Keasler, McNeese State
Pete Richardson, Southern
Jim Tressel, Youngstown State
Alex Wood, James Madison

The buck stops here

Fans who monitor the various All-American teams probably did a double-take when they saw this listing on the *Football Gazette's* 1995 NCAA Division I-AA teams:

LB Buck Buchanan, Hofstra, Jr., 6-0, 230, Philadelphia, Pa.

Don't look for Buchanan on the Flying Dutchmen's roster this season—he doesn't exist. In reality, he's Eugene McAleer. Confused? So was Hofstra sports information director Jim Sheehan when he first saw the All-American team.

"Eugene was one of several players we pushed for postseason honors," Sheehan said. "At the top of the page with his credentials, it said, 'Buck Buchanan candidate.' I guess someone read the thing in a hurry."

The Buck Buchanan Award, named for the former Kansas City Chiefs star, is given to the top defensive player in I-AA. McAleer didn't win, but he did get named to The Sports Network's second-team All-America squad. As he enters his senior season, McAleer has the distinction of having been selected for two All-America teams but "named" to just one.

Making a list

Which conference is best? Glad you asked. Following is how the I-AA conferences stack up:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Southern | 8. Ivy |
| 2. Southland | 9. Mid-Eastern Athletic |
| 3. Big Sky | 10. Patriot |
| 4. Yankee | 11. Pioneer |
| 5. Gateway | 12. Metro Atlantic Athletic |
| 6. Ohio Valley | 13. Northeast |
| 7. Southwestern Athletic | |

Feeling the draft

Twenty-nine players from I-AA teams were chosen in the 1996 NFL draft. The first I-AA player selected was Jamain Stephens, an offensive tackle from North Carolina A&T, taken with the 29th pick of the first round by the Pittsburgh Steelers. Four schools had two players drafted: Jackson State, Northern Arizona, UT Chattanooga and Tennessee State.

Robert Morris has played just two seasons of football, but already the Colonials have an NFL draft pick: fullback Tim Hall, taken in the sixth round (183rd overall pick) by the Oakland Raiders. As a junior, Hall set a I-AA record by gaining 8.7 yards per carry. He rushed for 2,908 yards in 19 games for Robert Morris.

Following is a breakdown, by league, of the I-AA players drafted:

Ohio Valley: 7
Southwestern Athletic: 5
Big Sky: 4
Southland: 3
Independents: 3
Mid-Eastern Athletic: 2
Southern: 2
Yankee: 2
Gateway: 1

Squib kicks

The teams that met in the I-AA championship game last year, Montana and Marshall, return a combined 35 starters this season. What they won't have are the coaches who took them to the finals. Montana's Don Read retired the day before the start of spring practice. The Grizzlies' title in 1995 capped a 26-year head-coaching career. Marshall's Jim Donnan left for Georgia after six years with the Thundering Herd. Donnan took Marshall to the semifinals each of the past five years, including four trips to the finals and one national championship. ... Marshall will be the host for the I-AA championship game for the fifth consecutive year, its last before joining the Mid-American Conference in 1997. The Thundering Herd's first game as a I-A team will be against West Virginia, renewing their in-state rivalry after a 74-year hiatus. ... UT Chattanooga will host the 1997 title game. ... Prairie View A&M brings an NCAA-record 56-game losing streak into the 1996 season. ... Portland State moves up from Division II for the first year of a two-year compliance period before attaining full I-AA status. The Vikings are provisional members of the Big Sky but are ineligible for the league title and playoffs. ♦

Carl Dubois covers the Southland Football League and I-AA football for the Lake Charles (La.) American Press.

DIVISION I-AA TOP 20

PREDICTIONS

1. MONTANA
2. APPALACHIAN STATE
3. MARSHALL
4. DELAWARE
5. NORTHERN IOWA
6. MURRAY STATE
7. CONNECTICUT
8. MCNEESE STATE
9. TROY STATE
10. LIBERTY
11. HOFSTRA
12. EASTERN KENTUCKY
13. STEPHEN F. AUSTIN
14. SOUTHERN
15. RHODE ISLAND
16. MIDDLE TENNESSEE ST.
17. HAMPTON
18. FURMAN
19. IDAHO STATE
20. JACKSON STATE

TOP TRANSFERS

NAME	Pos.	New school/old school
Alli Abrew	QB	Cal Poly SLO/San Jose St.
Damon Atwater	RB	UT-Martin/Temple
Vince Bruno	LB	Western Illinois/Pacific
Derrick Beavers	TB	McNeese State/LSU
Bart Cason	FB	Indiana St./Vanderbilt
Reggie Curry	QB	S. Carolina State/Clemson
Frahn D'Anjou	TB	UT Chattanooga/Miss. St.
Cedric Douglas	QB	Texas Southern/Vanderbilt
John Emery	DL	Nicholls State/Tennessee
Don Fluegge	OL	Idaho State/San Diego St.
Ty Locatelli	LB	Western Illinois/Pacific
Tim Matijacec	LB	Portland State/Washington
Victor Rivers	OL	Marshall/Kentucky
Pete Simonian	LB	Boston University/UTEP
Jon Swift	LB	UT Martin/Temple
Marcus Taylor	QB	Alcorn State/LSU
Brad Waggoner	LB	Liberty/Georgia Tech
Jami Webb	CB	Weber State/Stanford

1995 PLAYOFFS

FIRST ROUND

Montana 48, Eastern Kentucky 0
Georgia Southern 24, Troy State 21
Stephen F. Austin 34, Eastern Illinois 29
Appalachian State 31, James Madison 24
Marshall 38, Jackson State 8
Northern Iowa 35, Murray State 34
Delaware 38, Hofstra 17
McNeese State 33, Idaho 3

SECOND ROUND

Montana 45, Georgia Southern 0
Stephen F. Austin 27, Appalachian State 17
Marshall 41, Northern Iowa 24
McNeese State 52, Delaware 18

SEMIFINALS

Montana 70, Stephen F. Austin 14
Marshall 25, McNeese State 13

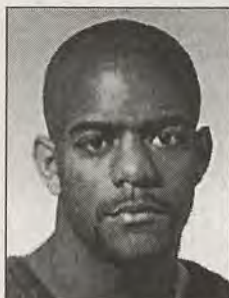
FINAL

Montana 22, Marshall 20

I-AA ALL-AMERICAN TEAM

OFFENSE

Pos.	Name	Ht./Wt.	Class	School
WR	DEDRIC WARD	5-9/179	Sr.	Northern Iowa
WR	KOBIE JENKINS	6-3/206	Sr.	Alcorn State
TE	ED PERRY	6-5/240	Sr.	James Madison
T	CHAD GROOVER	6-6/298	Sr.	Appalachian St.
T	JAMIE NAILS	6-7/377	Jr.	Florida A&M
G	JOSH BEYER	6-5/280	Sr.	William & Mary
G	MIKE AGEE	6-4/285	Sr.	Montana
C	SCOTT KADLUB	6-0/281	Sr.	Appalachian St.
QB	LEO HAMLETT	6-1/200	Sr.	Delaware
RB	ALFREDO ANDERSON	5-10/175	Sr.	Idaho State
RB	THOMAS HASKINS	5-8/172	Sr.	VMI
K	DAVE ETTINGER	6-0/215	Sr.	Hofstra



OFFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE YEAR

DEDRIC WARD
WR, Northern Iowa

DEFENSE

Pos.	Name	Ht./Wt.	Class	School
E	PRATT LYONS	6-4/280	Sr.	Troy State
T	BILLY LYON	6-5/290	Sr.	Marshall
E	JAMES RUSSELL	6-3/209	Sr.	E. Tennessee St.
LB	DEXTER COAKLEY	5-11/205	Sr.	Appalachian St.
LB	MICHAEL HOLCEY	6-3/235	Sr.	Tennessee State
LB	EUGENE McALEER	6-0/230	Sr.	Hofstra
LB	JASON CREBO	6-4/225	Jr.	Montana
CB	WILLIAM HAMPTON	6-1/175	Sr.	Murray State
CB	MELVIN CUNNINGHAM	5-10/180	Sr.	Marshall
S	ZACK BRONSON	6-1/200	Sr.	McNeese State
S	DARREN SHARPER	6-3/215	Sr.	William & Mary
P	TODD KURZ	6-4/205	Sr.	Illinois State



DEFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE YEAR

DEXTER COAKLEY
LB, Appalachian St.

1996 I-AA ALL-AMERICA RANKINGS

QUARTERBACKS	Ht./Wt.	Class	School
1. Leo Hamlett	6-1/200	Sr.	Delaware
2. Mike Cherry	6-4/220	Sr.	Murray State
3. Dave Loya	6-3/210	Jr.	Duquesne
4. Grailyn Pratt	6-0/190	Jr.	Jackson State
5. Braniff Bonaventure	6-2/190	Sr.	Furman
6. David Williams	6-2/215	Jr.	SW Texas State
7. Tony Corbin	6-4/215	Sr.	CS Sacramento
8. Sean Laird	6-1/172	Jr.	St. Mary's
9. Chad Pennington	6-3/190	Soph.	Marshall
10. Jason McCullough	6-1/200	Sr.	Brown

RUNNING BACKS	Ht./Wt.	Class	School
1. Alfredo Anderson	5-10/175	Sr.	Idaho State
2. Thomas Haskins	5-8/172	Sr.	VMI
3. Claude Mathis	5-9/180	Jr.	SW Texas State
4. Rabin Abdullah	6-1/210	Sr.	Lehigh
5. Jeff Stovall	5-10/213	Sr.	Northern Iowa
6. Rich Lemon	5-8/160	Sr.	Bucknell
7. Melvin Williams	5-10/195	Jr.	Southern
8. Lawrence Worthington	6-1/200	Sr.	Liberty
9. Damon Scott	5-10/209	Sr.	Appalachian State
10. Olandis Gary	5-11/204	Jr.	Marshall

WIDE RECEIVERS	Ht./Wt.	Class	School
1. Dedic Ward	5-9/179	Sr.	Northern Iowa
2. Kobe Jenkins	6-3/206	Sr.	Alcorn State
3. Kamil Loud	6-1/175	Jr.	Cal Poly SLO
4. Joey Stockton	5-9/171	Jr.	Western Kentucky
5. Tim Martin	5-9/176	Sr.	Marshall
6. Joe Douglass	6-0/180	Sr.	Montana
7. Cy Butler	5-7/165	Sr.	Rhode Island
8. Demetric Mostiller	5-7/160	Sr.	Middle Tenn. St.
9. Michael Jenkins	6-4/200	Sr.	Hampton
10. Jason Cannon	6-1/180	Jr.	SW Missouri State

TIGHT ENDS	Ht./Wt.	Class	School
1. Ed Perry	6-5/240	Sr.	James Madison
2. Jermaine Wiggins	6-3/245	Jr.	Marshall
3. Chris Fontenot	6-3/228	Sr.	McNeese State
4. Luther Broughton	6-2/248	Jr.	Furman
5. Russell Peevy	6-1/260	Sr.	SW Texas State

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	Ht./Wt.	Class	School
1. Scott Kadlub (C)	6-0/281	Sr.	Appalachian State
2. Mike Agee (G)	6-4/285	Sr.	Montana
3. Josh Beyer (G)	6-5/295	Sr.	William & Mary
4. Chad Groover (T)	6-6/298	Sr.	Appalachian State
5. Jamie Nails (T)	6-7/377	Jr.	Florida A&M
6. Kerry Jenkins (T)	6-6/275	Sr.	Troy State
7. Jimmy Butler (T)	6-5/285	Sr.	Western Carolina
8. Brian Chamberlain (T)	6-5/300	Sr.	Northeastern
9. Turner Goodwin (T)	6-1/284	Sr.	Western Kentucky
10. Andy Ziebarth (T)	6-4/285	Sr.	Illinois State

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	Ht./Wt.	Class	School
1. Billy Lyon (T)	6-5/290	Sr.	Marshall
2. Eric Johnson (T)	6-2/265	Sr.	Illinois State
3. Pratt Lyons (E)	6-4/280	Sr.	Troy State
4. James Russell (E)	6-3/209	Sr.	East Tennessee St.
5. Andre Jethroe (T)	5-10/240	Sr.	Youngstown State
6. Cedric White (T)	6-3/280	Sr.	North Carolina A&T
7. Jim Shannon (T)	6-2/260	Sr.	Hofstra
8. Clint Zander (T)	6-5/280	Jr.	Stephen F. Austin
9. Stacy Murry (E)	6-3/270	Jr.	Troy State
10. Jeff Galyean (E)	6-1/250	Sr.	Southern Utah

LINEBACKERS	Ht./Wt.	Class	School
1. Dexter Coakley	5-11/205	Sr.	Appalachian State
2. Michael Holcey	6-3/235	Sr.	Tennessee State
3. Eugene McAleer	6-0/230	Sr.	Hofstra
4. Jason Crebo	6-4/225	Jr.	Montana
5. Mark Abel	6-1/220	Sr.	Dartmouth
6. Mike Bouchee	6-2/241	Sr.	Montana
7. Carl Quiller	6-0/225	Sr.	McNeese State
8. Craig Guest	6-3/230	Sr.	Buffalo
9. Tony McCombs	6-2/235	Sr.	Eastern Kentucky
10. David Streeter	6-1/220	Sr.	Holy Cross

DEFENSIVE BACKS	Ht./Wt.	Class	School
1. Zack Bronson (FS)	6-1/200	Sr.	McNeese State
2. Darren Sharper (FS)	6-3/215	Sr.	William & Mary
3. Melvin Cunningham (CB)	5-10/180	Sr.	Marshall
4. William Hampton (CB)	6-1/175	Sr.	Murray State
5. Sean Woodson (SS)	6-2/210	Sr.	Jackson State
6. Damiyon Bell (SS)	5-11/178	Sr.	Stephen F. Austin
7. Damani Leech (CB)	5-11/160	Jr.	Princeton
8. Marcus Daniels (SS)	5-11/190	Sr.	McNeese State
9. Eric Mims (SS)	5-9/180	Jr.	Jacksonville State
10. Robert Taylor (CB)	6-0/185	Sr.	Tennessee Tech

KICKERS	Ht./Wt.	Class	School
1. Dave Ettinger	6-0/215	Sr.	Hofstra
2. Todd Kurz	6-4/205	Sr.	Illinois State
3. Gerald Carlson	6-0/194	Sr.	Buffalo
4. Jay Sutton	5-10/157	Sr.	Appalachian State
5. Scott Shields	6-4/210	Soph.	Weber State

PUNTERS	Ht./Wt.	Class	School
1. Todd Kurz	6-4/205	Sr.	Illinois State
2. Brandon Thomas	6-0/190	Jr.	Middle Tenn. St.
3. Tom Antongiovanni	6-1/184	Jr.	St. Mary's
4. James Ferrell	5-11/170	Jr.	Idaho State
5. Steve Fill	6-3/220	Soph.	William & Mary

KICK RETURNERS	Ht./Wt.	Class	School
1. Claude Mathis	5-9/180	Jr.	SW Texas State
2. Andrew McFadden	5-9/197	Sr.	Liberty
3. Jermaine Sharp	5-11/198	Sr.	Southern
4. Cy Butler	5-7/165	Sr.	Rhode Island
5. Arid Gregory	5-10/185	Sr.	Troy State

Montana linebacker Crebo helps to make it grisly for opponents

By JIM MEEHAN

Montana wanted Jason Crebo so badly after the 1992 high school season that then-coach Don Read temporarily remodeled the living room in Crebo's house.

Easy, NCAA gumshoes, no violations here. Just a heartfelt recruiting pitch from a coach to the top in-state player, a linebacker from Helena.

"We've never in the 10 years I've been here worked harder on a recruit," said Read, who unexpectedly resigned in early April. "On our last visit, I brought videotape, a depth chart, pictures of the stadium and our defenses and where he would fit in, an easel. So much stuff ... we basically set up a lab in the middle of his living room."

Why all the fuss?

"I can't remember anybody more dominant on film than that guy," said Read, a veteran of 37 years of coaching.

As a sophomore last season (he was red-shirted in 1993), Crebo was runner-up for the Big Sky Conference's Defensive Player of the Year Award. He helped transform a defense from one that surrendered 55 points to Idaho in an October game into a stingy unit that permitted 34 total points in four I-AA playoff games. And, in the first two postseason games, Crebo and Co. pitched shutouts.

By mid-December, the Grizzlies claimed their first national championship. Crebo, though, claimed little of the credit—despite his five sacks and 71 tackles in the regular season, all-league recognition and stellar postseason play.

"We've got some great athletes, no superstars," Crebo said. "The only thing we wanted was the national title."

"He's modest," said Crebo's best friend, fellow Helena product Andy Larson, who kicked the game-winning and title-deciding field goal in a 22-20 victory over Marshall on the Thundering Herd's home field. "He doesn't want to come off as brash. He caused the fumble that set up our last touchdown and he had tons of other tackles."

Crebo (6-4, 225) is the latest link in a chain of molar-adjusting hitters on Montana's defense, as confirmed by his uniform No. 37. As the story goes, No. 37 is passed down by a senior to a freshman. The wearer must meet the following criteria: show toughness, be contact-hungry and possess Montana roots.

NFL safety Tim Hauck, of Big Timber, Mont., wore No. 37. He passed it on to Butte's Todd Ericson, another crunching tackler. And Ericson draped it over Crebo's shoulders.

"I don't think they could have picked a better player," Larson said.

Still, the No. 37 jersey didn't fit too snugly for a while. In his freshman year, Crebo had mononucleosis, and there also was concern of a possible heart problem. At one



Jason Crebo and the rest of the Montana defense stepped it up in last year's playoffs.

time, he was on 10 medications. A later diagnosis determined Crebo had a hernia.

"It's almost like an ulcer," Crebo said. "I still have it, but it's not near as bad as it used to be."

Once healthy, he quickly became a contributor. Crebo has a rare combination of speed, power and savvy.

"I've probably coached three or four 'maybes' for the NFL," Read said, "but he's a clear-cut guy. He goes sideline to sideline and goes right through the ballcarrier."

Crebo's big moments weren't confined to the field in 1995. Early in the season, he had a reunion with his biological father, who lives in southern Idaho.

"It had just been a long time," Crebo said. "I talked it over with my mom and we just figured it was the right time, since I'd never known him."

The two have stayed in touch.

During Crebo's youth, the father he never knew was replaced by Duncan Crebo, who married Crebo's mother when Jason was about 5.

"He coached me when I was younger, pretty much guided me," Crebo said of Duncan, who drowned on a fishing trip when Jason was a high school sophomore. "I say a little prayer before every game and talk to him."

Although Montana has lost quarterback Dave Dickenson, winner of I-AA's top individual honor (the Walter Payton Award) last season, Crebo is enthusiastic about the 1996 season. Yes, Dickenson threw for 4,176 yards and 38 touchdowns in the '95 regular season as the Grizzlies topped I-AA in passing offense, total offense and scor-

PREDICTIONS

ALL-BIG SKY TEAM

OFFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
WR	JOE DOUGLASS, Montana	6-0/180	Sr.
WR	DAVID ROMINES, CS Northridge	5-10/167	Sr.
TE	CHAD MAYER, Montana State	6-3/243	Sr.
T	STEVE BURCH, Idaho State	6-5/290	Sr.
T	DAN FINN, Northern Arizona	6-4/270	Jr.
G	MIKE AGEE, Montana	6-5/285	Sr.
G	T.J. ACKERMAN, E. Washington	6-2/285	Soph.
C	DAVID KEMPFERT, Montana	6-4/278	Sr.
QB	TONY CORBIN, CS Sacramento	6-4/220	Sr.
RB	ALFREDO ANDERSON, Idaho St.	5-10/180	Sr.
RB	ARCHIE AMERSON, N. Arizona	5-9/175	Sr.

DEFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
E	JOSH HAYS, Idaho State	6-2/235	Jr.
T	BEN PETRUCCI, Northern Arizona	6-2/260	Sr.
T	SAMMIE ALUMUVAE, Portland State	6-2/260	Jr.
E	NEAL SMITH, Montana State	6-5/234	Jr.
LB	JASON CREBO, Montana	6-4/225	Jr.
LB	DEREK STREY, E. Washington	6-3/218	Jr.
LB	MIKE BOUCHEE, Montana	6-2/241	Sr.
CB	IAN FRANKLIN, Weber State	6-4/205	Sr.
CB	MARCUS JACKSON, Idaho State	6-1/175	Sr.
S	BLAINE McELMURRY, Montana	6-1/205	Sr.
S	NEIL FENDALL, Portland State	6-1/195	Sr.

SPECIALISTS

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
K	SCOTT SHIELDS, Weber State	6-4/210	Soph.
P	JAMES FERRELL, Idaho State	5-11/170	Jr.
KR	KENYATTE MORGAN, Montana St.	5-7/150	Jr.

PLAYERS OF THE YEAR



OFFENSE:

ALFREDO ANDERSON
RB, Idaho State



DEFENSE:

JASON CREBO
LB, Montana

ing, but the defense got its share of attention in the playoffs.

"Last year was a good feeling because a lot of times we've been overshadowed (by the offense), but we showed we can play," said Crebo, alluding to the Grizzlies' shutouts against Eastern Kentucky and Georgia Southern in the playoffs and their containment of Marshall running back Chris Parker in the national final. "We've had another year, so we should get better." ♦

Jim Meehan covers college football for the *Spokesman-Review* in Spokane, Wash.

BIG SKY TEAM CHARTS

1. MONTANA

Coach: Mick Dennehy (first year).

1995 record: 13-2 (won I-AA title). Big Sky: 6-1/1st.

Top players: Mike Agee, G; Mike Bouchee, ILB; Jason Crebo, OLB; Joe Douglass, WR/PR; Mike Erhardt, WR; Corey Falls, DE; David Kempfert, C; Blaine McElmurry, FS; Brian Toone, DT; Jeff Zellick, G.

Strengths: The cornerstone of this team could be the defense, not the traditionally potent offense. Standout players man each row—linebacker Crebo and safety McElmurry. A talented offensive line and sure-handed receivers Erhardt and Douglass should ease a new quarterback into the comfort zone.

Weaknesses: Josh Paffhausen has a slight edge over Brian Ah Yat in the race to replace Payton Trophy winner Dave Dickenson at quarterback. Paffhausen is an excellent athlete, but his arm strength is a question.

Outlook: Dennehy, the Montana assistant who took over as coach when Don Read unexpectedly resigned in April, needs Dickenson's successor to deliver if the Grizzlies are to make another title run. If the quarterback struggles, the defense will have to make the difference.

Schedule: at Oregon State, Sept. 7; Cal Poly SLO, Sept. 14; at CS Sacramento, Sept. 28; Southern Utah, Oct. 5; Idaho State, Oct. 12; at Eastern Washington, Oct. 19; Northern Arizona, Oct. 26; at CS Northridge, Nov. 2; Portland State, Nov. 9; at Weber State, Nov. 16; Montana State, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1995.

Nickname: Grizzlies. **Site:** Missoula, Mont.

2. IDAHO STATE

Coach: Brian McNeely (17-27, 4 years).

1995 record: 6-5. Big Sky: 3-4/6th.

Top players: Alfredo Anderson, RB; Gary Anderson, QB; Josh Brown, LB/DB; Steve Burch, OT; James Ferrell, P; Elliott Giles, WR; Josh Hays, DE; Marcus Jackson, CB; Eric Johnson, OLB; Telly Lockette, LB/DB; Justin Young, WR.

Strengths: Alfredo Anderson is a game-breaker, and the Bengals' skill positions are amply covered. Gary Anderson played well at the end of last season, spurring former quarterback starter Robb Wetta to transfer to Fresno State. Hays has 30 career sacks—and he's only a junior.

Weaknesses: The offensive line is suspect, though Burch is a load. The loss of defensive tackle Alipate Taulupe will make Hays' job tougher. Taulupe supplied the inside pressure that allowed Hays to speed-rush outside.

Outlook: Seasoned Idaho State has made steady steps up the conference ladder. This year should be no different. Anderson throws the ball downfield (Wetta didn't), so the offense could be high scoring.

Schedule: at Mississippi, Aug. 31; Cal Poly SLO, Sept. 7; Western Montana, Sept. 21; at Montana State, Sept. 28; CS Sacramento, Oct. 5; at Montana, Oct. 12; Eastern Washington, Oct. 26; at Northern Arizona, Nov. 2; CS Northridge, Nov. 9; at Portland State, Nov. 16; Weber State, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1983.

Nickname: Bengals. **Site:** Pocatello, Idaho.

3. NORTHERN ARIZONA

Coach: Steve Axman (33-33, 6 years).

1995 record: 7-4. Big Sky: 4-3/2nd.

Top players: Archie Amerson, HB; Travis Brown, QB; Dan Finn, OL; Kevin Kolkman, DL; Ryan Lingfelder, C; Nate Miconi, OLB; Ben Petrucci, DT; Nick Petrucci, DE; Kevin Stephens, QB; Chris Warner, WR.

Strengths: The Lumberjacks can line up with anybody. The offensive front should be stellar, and Amerson has a nice blend of power and speed. The defensive line may be the conference's best, with Kolkman and the brothers Petrucci.

Weaknesses: Like Montana and Dickinson, Northern Arizona must replace a sterling QB, Jeff Lewis. Skill-position players are weaker than in recent years. Continuity may suffer with the defections of the team's coordinators.

Outlook: NAU was fairly conservative last year, so the new QB (Stephens or Travis Palmer) should step in without much difficulty. The defense must continue its stingy trend of the past few seasons for Northern to be in the title hunt.

Schedule: Western New Mexico, Aug. 29; at New Mexico, Sept. 7; Southern Utah, Sept. 14; at Portland State, Sept. 21; CS Northridge, Sept. 28; Weber State, Oct. 5; at Montana

State, Oct. 12; CS Sacramento, Oct. 19; at Montana, Oct. 26; Idaho State, Nov. 2; at E. Washington, Nov. 9.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Lumberjacks. **Site:** Flagstaff, Ariz.

4. WEBER STATE

Coach: Dave Arslanian (40-38, 7 years).

1995 record: 6-5. Big Sky: 4-3/2nd.

Top players: Roger Cook, QB; Ian Franklin, CB; Max Mitchell, DB; Kris Nelson, OT; Naki Pilivi, LB; Clemente Sautin, RB; Scott Shields, K; Brandon Smith, DE; Kyle Stephens, OT; Jami Webb, CB.

Strengths: Cook, Sautin and a quality corps of receivers should enable the Wildcats to put up points. Shields was All-Big Sky last year.

Weaknesses: Graduation losses have depleted the front seven. Unproven linebackers must step up.

Outlook: The defense has to show it's capable of replacing key players. Cook did a creditable job replacing injured Bryan Martin in the last half of 1995. If he improves, Weber State might be an offensive power and a Big Sky contender.

Schedule: Eastern Washington, Sept. 7; Western State (Colo.), Sept. 14; at Cal Poly SLO, Sept. 21; at Toledo, Sept. 28; at Northern Arizona, Oct. 5; CS Northridge, Oct. 12; at Portland State, Oct. 19; Montana State, Nov. 2; at CS Sacramento, Nov. 9; Montana, Nov. 16; at Idaho State, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1991.

Nickname: Wildcats. **Site:** Ogden, Utah.

5. MONTANA STATE

Coach: Cliff Hysell (19-25, 4 years).

1995 record: 5-6. Big Sky: 2-5/7th.

Top players: Rob Compson, QB; Matt Engelking, TB; Devlan Geddes, DE; Jared Lucero, CB; Scott Matthews, SS; Chad Mayer, TE; Kenyatta Morgan, WR/KR; Ty O'Connor, DT; Neal Smith, DE; Omar Turner, CB; Jeff Tuss, QB.

Strengths: Engelking is an effective straight-ahead runner, an endearing trait with the run-oriented Hysell. The secondary could be one of the conference's best, and Geddes and Smith figure to meet in enemy backfields time and again.

Weaknesses: Quarterback is unsettled as Tuss and Compson duel it out. The winner will operate behind a line that lost four starters. Linebacking experience is limited.

Outlook: The defense could emerge as stout and make the Bobcats better than the '95 edition. A mostly experienced offense should find the end zone more often than last year. Morgan is a threat as a receiver and return man.

Schedule: at Nevada, Sept. 14; Minnesota-Duluth, Sept. 21; Idaho State, Sept. 28; at Eastern Washington, Oct. 5; Northern Arizona, Oct. 12; at CS Northridge, Oct. 19; Portland State, Oct. 26; at Weber State, Nov. 2; Cal Poly SLO, Nov. 9; CS Sacramento, Nov. 16; at Montana, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1984.

Nickname: Bobcats. **Site:** Bozeman, Mont.

6. EASTERN WASHINGTON

Coach: Mike Kramer (7-15, 2 years).

1995 record: 3-8. Big Sky: 1-6/8th.

Top players: T. J. Ackerman, OL; Aaron Barfield, OL; Jim Buzzard, OL; Griffin Garske, QB; Justin Guillory, LB; Jerrold Jackson, WR; Steve Mattson, DL; Kevin Peterson, OL; Chris Scott, DL; Joe Sewell, LB; Derek Strey, LB.

Strengths: The Eagles are ecstatic that Sewell has been granted another year of eligibility after missing the '92 and '94 seasons with knee injuries. As usual, the offensive line should be solid.

Weaknesses: A young defense must improve—or get used to the sight of officials' arms pointed skyward. The search is on for stable defenders to surround Scott Strey and Guillory.

Outlook: The defense may still be shell-shocked from the final three games of last season when Eastern Washington allowed 63, 63 and 52 points. Garske, a strong-armed red-shirt freshman, is expected to win the quarterback job.

Schedule: at Weber State, Sept. 7; at Boise State, Sept. 14; Southwest Texas, Sept. 21; Portland State, Sept. 28; Montana State, Oct. 5; at CS Sacramento, Oct. 12; Montana, Oct. 19; at Idaho State, Oct. 26; at Idaho, Nov. 2; Northern Arizona, Nov. 9; at CS Northridge, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1992.

Nickname: Eagles. **Site:** Cheney, Wash.

7. CAL STATE SACRAMENTO

Coach: John Volek (4-6-1, 1 year).

1995 record: 4-6-1 as an independent.

Top players: Tony Corbin, QB; Dave DeMink, OL; Mike Henry, OL; Chad Johnson, SS; Damien Mason, LB; Stephan Richardson, WR; Daimon Shelton, TB; Garth Smith, TB; Michael Stewart, TB; Ryland Wickman, LB.

Strengths: With Corbin calling signals, the Hornets are one of a few Big Sky teams with the luxury of a returning QB. Corbin threw 17 TD passes last season, and Stewart rushed for 1,161 yards. Recruits should provide an infusion of speed.

Weaknesses: With the program on its deathbed not long ago, CS Sacramento has a long way to go in terms of recruiting. On the field, new faces must prop up a sorry defense.

Outlook: The Hornets have been competitive with the Big Sky's bottom feeders in recent years but blown out by the conference's elite. That probably won't change until the school reaches its full scholarship level.

Schedule: at Hofstra, Sept. 7; at UC Davis, Sept. 21; Montana, Sept. 28; at Idaho State, Oct. 5; Eastern Washington, Oct. 12; at Northern Arizona, Oct. 19; CS Northridge, Oct. 26; at Portland State, Nov. 2; Weber State, Nov. 9; at Montana State, Nov. 16; Cal Poly SLO, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Hornets. **Site:** Sacramento, Calif.

8. CAL STATE NORTHRIDGE

Coach: Dave Baldwin (2-8 record, 1 year).

1995 record: 2-8 as an independent.

Top players: Aaron Flowers, QB; Marc Goodson, LB; Tim Hilton, WR; Teddy Mack, SS; Chad Marsalek, FB; David Mori, DL; David Romines, WR; Paul Sauter, OL; Doug Varner, DB; James Woods, SS.

Strengths: Romines, who missed last season because of a shoulder injury, and Hilton are proven receivers. Hilton caught 64 passes last season (20 in one game). A solid linebacking corps returns.

Weaknesses: The Matadors yielded 35.5 points per game last season, including 68 and 52 to Big Sky teams Northern Arizona and Idaho State. Shaky lines could be shored up by JC recruits.

Outlook: The new QB—Flowers or Derek Brown—must home in on Romines and Hilton. The defense needs to improve or CS Northridge will be in the deep south of the standings in its inaugural Big Sky season.

Schedule: at Utah State, Sept. 7; UC Davis, Sept. 14; at New Mexico State, Sept. 21; at Northern Arizona, Sept. 28; Portland State, Oct. 5; at Weber State, Oct. 12; Montana State, Oct. 19; at CS Sacramento, Oct. 26; Montana, Nov. 2; at Idaho State, Nov. 9; Eastern Washington, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Matadors. **Site:** Northridge, Calif.

PORTLAND STATE

Coach: Tim Walsh (25-11, 3 years; 52-25 overall, 7 years).

1995 record: 8-5 in Division II.

Top players: Sammie Aumuvae, NT; Skinner Avinger, SS; Alano Ciliberto, C; Gary Clemons, RB; Neil Fendall, FS; Kyle Holley, WR; Oleg Lytchanyi, DT; Tim Matijacic, LB; Brian Warner, RB; Haze Willoughby, OT.

Strengths: Ciliberto headlines a fine line. Fendall will be counted on heavily in the pass-happy Big Sky. Washington transfer Matijacic should step right in, and the defensive line is loaded.

Weaknesses: Graduation took a heavy toll at the skill positions. Motivation may be lacking because Portland State, although gaining Big Sky membership, won't immediately be eligible for the league title.

Outlook: The Vikings have more than held their own against Big Sky foes in the past decade, so they should be competitive at the outset.

Schedule: at Boise State, Sept. 7; Sonoma State (Calif.), Sept. 14; Northern Arizona, Sept. 21; at Eastern Washington, Sept. 28; at CS Northridge, Oct. 5; UC Davis, Oct. 12; Weber State, Oct. 19; at Montana State, Oct. 26; CS Sacramento, Nov. 2; at Montana, Nov. 9; Idaho State, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Vikings. **Site:** Portland, Ore.

Text by Jim Meehan.

When topic is receiving numbers, Northern Iowa's Ward is No. 1

BY RANDY REINHARDT

Dedric Ward came to the University of Northern Iowa three years ago with one goal: to become the next Kenny Shedd, who had just left the Panthers' program as the all-time leading receiver (2,243 yards) in Gateway Conference history.

After three seasons that have ranged from productive to awe-inspiring, Ward's biggest problem may be setting a new goal.

"I knew (Shedd) was a great receiver. I was hoping I could be just as good," says Ward, who already has piled up 2,707 yards and 27 receiving touchdowns—both Gateway records—and needs just 13 catches to surpass the all-time league mark of 144 held by Gunnard Twynier of Western Illinois. "I was coming in to produce the same excitement as when he was here. I really give credit to him for giving me something to shoot for."

Ward had every reason to admire Shedd, a fifth-round pick of the New York Jets in 1993. But Ward has surpassed him. Last season, Ward led all Division I-AA receivers with 116.4 yards per game and finished with 44 receptions for 1,164 yards (a 26.4-yard average) and 12 touchdowns in 10 games.

"I was really surprised when I found out I led the nation," Ward says. "It really made me feel special."

Ward (5-9, 179) has been extremely special to Northern Iowa coach Terry Allen, whose teams have won or shared six consecutive Gateway titles.

"First and foremost is his competitive nature," Allen says. "He believes when the ball is in the air he has the ability to make the catch with players all over him. He has continued to improve each and every year. He does the little things that make him a great receiver."

Ward had four games of at least 175 yards receiving last season.

"He just makes plays," says Southern Illinois coach Shawn Watson, whose Salukis were scorched for nine catches for 206 yards in a 13-0 loss to Northern Iowa last season. "He has great speed. But it's one thing to have great speed; it's another to have great speed and deliver big plays."

"He delivers big plays and not just one in



As he heads into his senior season, Dedric Ward already holds conference records for receiving yardage and touchdown receptions.

a game—three or four. He's a difference-maker."

Northern Iowa assistant Wes Anderson recruited Ward out of Cedar Rapids (Iowa) Washington High, and Ward credits Anderson for accelerating his progress.

"He really worked with me. He showed me how to be a great receiver in this league," Ward says. "He fine-tuned the skills I had coming in."

What makes Ward's accomplishments all the more remarkable is that he has played with different quarterbacks each year—and it will be the same this year, as last year's starter, Chris Berg, has graduated.

"The most important thing is getting the timing down," Ward says of working with new quarterbacks. "Everyone has different arm strength and release time. You have to work through it. Having played here, I have the advantage over the other guys. I mainly try to give them confidence if they do make a mistake."

Northern Iowa has an excellent chance of making its seventh consecutive trip to the Division I-AA playoffs. Ward says such a track record provides a healthy expectation of success.

"It has a great influence on myself and my teammates," he says. "Some of the younger guys haven't caught the fire yet, but the junior and senior classes strive harder to keep the tradition going."

PREDICTIONS

ALL-GATEWAY TEAM

OFFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
WR	DEDRIC WARD, Northern Iowa	5-9/179	Sr.
WR	JASON CANNON, SW Missouri	6-1/180	Jr.
TE	DAMON JONES, Southern Illinois	6-6/280	Sr.
T	ANDY ZIEBARTH, Illinois State	6-4/265	Sr.
T	BRAD KUBIK, SW Missouri	6-4/270	Jr.
G	STEVE JONES, Southern Illinois	6-2/302	Sr.
G	BRAD SCHWING, Indiana State	6-2/325	Sr.
C	PAXTON PARKER, SW Missouri	6-3/275	Sr.
QB	JEFF HECKLINSKI, W. Illinois	6-3/205	Jr.
RB	BRIAN KNUCKLES, W. Illinois	6-0/210	Sr.
RB	JEFF STOVALL, Northern Iowa	5-10/213	Sr.

DEFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
E	ERIC JOHNSON, Illinois State	6-2/265	Sr.
T	MIKE MIANO, SW Missouri	6-3/303	Sr.
E	EARENST GRAYSON, SW Missouri	6-2/225	Sr.
LB	CHRIS LIBAIRE, Indiana State	6-1/215	Sr.
LB	TIM MILLER, Northern Iowa	6-3/212	Sr.
LB	DANNIE SPANN, Northern Iowa	6-0/235	Sr.
LB	BENNIE MCILIN, SW Missouri	6-0/212	Sr.
CB	TYREE TALTON, Northern Iowa	6-0/189	Soph.
CB	DRE' KNOX, Indiana State	5-6/160	Sr.
S	DUANE BUTLER, Illinois State	6-3/210	Sr.
S	LAMONT NICHOLSON, W. Illinois	6-1/210	Sr.

SPECIALISTS

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
K	TODD KURZ, Illinois State	6-4/215	Sr.
P	TODD KURZ, Illinois State	6-4/215	Sr.
KR	KARLTON CARPENTER, S. Illinois	5-9/200	Soph.

PLAYERS OF THE YEAR



OFFENSE:

DEDRIC WARD
WR, Northern Iowa



DEFENSE:

ERIC JOHNSON
T/E, Illinois State

Ward's height may hurt in his quest to become an NFL receiver, but his 4.4-second speed in the 40 and his eye-popping statistics should merit some attention. "I'll try to produce some more numbers and hopefully get some (NFL) looks," he says. "If not, it's back to the books to get a good education."

After taking opposing defensive backs to school the past three years, Ward certainly knows the way.

Randy Reinhardt covers Illinois State and the Gateway Conference for the *Bloomington (Ill.) Pantagraph*.

GATEWAY TEAM CHARTS

1. NORTHERN IOWA

Coach: Terry Allen (63-24, 7 years).

1995 record: 8-5 (including 1-1 in I-AA playoffs). Gateway: 5-1/1T1st.

Top players: Steve Beard, QB; Alonzo Clayton, WR; Marcus Easter, DB; Tim Miller, OLB; Dannie Spann, ILB; Jeff Stovall, RB; Tyree Talton, CB; Justin Urbanek, P; Matt Waller, K; Dedric Ward, WR.

Strengths: Ward is a game-breaker who will add to his many conference records. Stovall, a second-team All-Gateway pick, will thrive if he can stay healthy. Six of the top eight tacklers return, including the top two in Spann and Miller. Talton and Easter star in a stellar secondary.

Weaknesses: Replacements must be found for key graduation losses on both lines. Waller, who was 10-of-20 on field-goal attempts last season, needs to return to his 17-field goal form of 1994.

Outlook: If Allen can find a capable first-time starter at quarterback for the fourth consecutive season, other Gateway teams will have a rough time preventing the Panthers from winning their seventh league crown in a row. This may be the year for playoff success, too, something that has eluded UNI since 1992, when the Panthers advanced to the I-AA semifinals.

Schedule: at Southern Utah, Aug. 31; St. Cloud St., Sept. 7; S.F. Austin, Sept. 14; at Iowa State, Sept. 21; McNeese State, Sept. 28; Illinois State, Oct. 12; SW Missouri State, Oct. 19; at Southern Illinois, Oct. 26; at Youngstown State, Nov. 2; at Indiana State, Nov. 9; W. Illinois, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1995.

Nickname: Panthers. **Site:** Cedar Falls, Iowa.

2. SW MISSOURI STATE

Coach: Del Miller (4-7, 1 year).

1995 record: 4-7. Gateway: 1-5/7th.

Top players: Jason Cannon, WR; Michael Cosey, RB; Earenest Grayson, DE; Jeremy Hoog, QB; Brad Kubik, OT; Bennie McLin, LB; Mike Miano, DT; Paxton Parker, C; Tom Procter, DE; Travis Richardson, FS; Ryan Touhey, G; Jason Whittle, OT.

Strengths: The comfort factor that accompanies Miller's second season as coach should help. So should 37 returning lettermen, including 13 starters. Hoog and Cannon form a potent combination. The Bears boast experience and talent on the defensive line and at linebacker.

Weaknesses: Richardson is the lone returning starter in a thin secondary. The receiving corps doesn't look deep, either. The Bears certainly will need to cut down on turnovers after committing 28—with a minus-9 turnover ratio—last season.

Outlook: With seven starters back on offense and six on defense, the Bears should be better in close games—they were 0-4 last year in games decided by three points or less. Southwest Missouri's 3-1 finish could be a portent of good things to come.

Schedule: at Oklahoma State, Aug. 31; at McNeese State, Sept. 7; Truman State (Mo.), Sept. 14; at UT Martin, Sept. 21; Jacksonville State, Sept. 28; Southern Illinois, Oct. 5; at Northern Iowa, Oct. 19; Illinois State, Oct. 26; W. Illinois, Nov. 2; Youngstown State, Nov. 9; at Indiana State, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1990.

Nickname: Bears. **Site:** Springfield, Mo.

3. INDIANA STATE

Coach: Dennis Raetz (84-93-1, 16 years).

1995 record: 7-4. Gateway: 3-3/3rd.

Top players: Larry Brown, WR; Kevin Cox, QB; Matt Graham, OLB; Robert High, FS; Dre' Knox, CB; Chris Libaire, LB; Mike Likens, DT; Richard Moss, LB; Jason Potter, TB; Brad Schwing, G; Ben Wolfe, FB.

Strengths: Libaire, the Gateway's leading tackler last season, could be the conference's most dominant linebacker. Eight starters return on defense, including standouts in High, Knox and Likens. Six of the top seven receivers return as well.

Weaknesses: The offensive line needs major retooling; Schwing is the lone returning starter, and he is being moved from center. Potter may blossom in his senior year, but the Sycamores almost need him to after losing David Wright, the second all-time leading rusher in Gateway history.



ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

Expect Illinois State to move senior Eric Johnson all over the defensive line to exploit mismatches.

Outlook: If the offense shows improvement, the Sycamores' formidable defense could carry them a long way. But there could be some after-effects from the end of last season, when Indiana State lost its final two games by a 52-6 margin to cost itself a playoff berth.

Schedule: Mars Hill (N.C.), Aug. 29; at Kansas State, Sept. 7; at Eastern Illinois, Sept. 14; St. Joseph's, Sept. 21; at Liberty, Sept. 28; at Western Illinois, Oct. 5; at Southern Illinois, Oct. 12; Illinois State, Oct. 19; at Western Kentucky, Oct. 26; Northern Iowa, Nov. 9; SW Missouri State, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1984.

Nickname: Sycamores. **Site:** Terre Haute, Ind.

4. WESTERN ILLINOIS

Coach: Randy Ball (33-33-1, 6 years).

1995 record: 4-7. Gateway: 2-4/7th.

Top players: Vince Bruno, LB; Ryan Culver, DL; Daron Duke, OL; Jeff Hecklinski, QB; Brian Knuckles, RB; Ty Locatelli, LB; Darryl Mitchell, CB; Lamont Nicholson, SS; Frank Spraggins, FS; Wayne Stewart, DL.

Strengths: Ball should have a ball watching Hecklinski (a former transfer from Illinois) and Knuckles (a former transfer from Nebraska) do their thing on offense this fall. Bruno and Locatelli, a couple of Pacific transfers, should provide Spraggins and Nicholson with immediate assistance.

Weaknesses: Eight starters return, four on each side of the ball, and replacements must be found for receivers Gunnard Twyner and Chris Sabino. Blending in 13 transfers may present a problem. The return teams look suspect.

Outlook: The Leathernecks may be a year away from being an excellent team. The talent level is adequate, but too much inexperience figures to preclude title contention in 1996, when Western Illinois will play three Top 20 teams on the road. A return to his spectacular freshman form by Spraggins would help immensely.

Schedule: NW Oklahoma, Aug. 29; at N. Illinois, Sept. 7; Glenview State (W.Va.), Sept. 14; at Hofstra, Sept. 21; Indiana State, Oct. 5; at E. Illinois, Oct. 12; at Southern Illinois, Oct. 19; Cal Poly-SLO, Oct. 26; at SW Missouri State, Nov. 2; Illinois State, Nov. 9; at Northern Iowa, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1991.

Nickname: Leathernecks. **Site:** Macomb, Ill.

5. ILLINOIS STATE

Coach: Todd Berry (first year).

1995 record: 5-6. Gateway: 3-3/3rd.

Top players: Duane Butler, FS; Jerry Creer, CB; Dion Dixon, G; Ray Fouchea, WR; Bill Hagman, QB; Jarrett Jackson, WR; Eric Johnson, DL; Todd Kurz, P/K; Deon McDaniel, CB/KR; Andy Ziebarth, OT.

Strengths: Johnson will be moved up and down the defen-

sive line to maximize his considerable talents. Butler and Creer anchor a secondary that allowed a 47 percent completion rate last season. Kurz, who was 19-of-25 on field-goal attempts and averaged 41 yards per punt, could be best combination kicker in I-AA.

Weaknesses: Berry is searching for the right quarterback to run his wide-open attack. After Ziebarth, the offensive line is a huge question. The linebackers will be as green as the turf in Hancock Stadium.

Outlook: Berry, formerly the offensive coordinator at East Carolina, has brought enthusiasm, but he needs more speed, depth and experience for his offensive and defensive systems to compete with the Gateway's elite.

Schedule: at Buffalo, Aug. 29; at North Texas, Sept. 7; SE Missouri State, Sept. 14; Youngstown State, Sept. 21; S. Illinois, Sept. 28; at Northern Iowa, Oct. 12; at Indiana State, Oct. 19; SW Missouri State, Oct. 26; at Central Florida, Nov. 2; at W. Illinois, Nov. 9; Tennessee Tech, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Redbirds. **Site:** Normal, Ill.

6. SOUTHERN ILLINOIS

Coach: Shawn Watson (6-16, 2 years).

1995 record: 5-6. Gateway: 2-4/7th.

Top players: Tommy Anderson, LB; Karlton Carpenter, RB/KR; C.J. McDavid, DB; Mark Gagliano, P; Darryl Holland, DL; Damon Jones, TE; Steve Jones, G; Salam Nazir, DL; Larry Watkins, OL.

Strengths: At 6-6 and 280 pounds, Damon Jones is a sure-fire NFL prospect. He is the best of a promising group of receivers. Carpenter is an explosive running back/kick returner. Three starters return in the secondary, and Gagliano averaged 40.2 yards per punt.

Weaknesses: Quarterback looks like a problem area after last year's starter, Dan Smith, departed for academic reasons. Two JC transfers will duel. The top two tacklers graduated and linebackers need to emerge. SIU was last in the league in scoring offense and scoring defense last season.

Outlook: Playing seven home games for the first time in 66 years can't hurt, and Watson has made progress, but bettering last season's conference record will be difficult.

Schedule: Central Arkansas, Aug. 31; UT-Martin, Sept. 7; at Murray State, Sept. 14; Winston-Salem, Sept. 21; at Illinois State, Sept. 28; at Southwest Missouri State, Oct. 5; Indiana State, Oct. 12; Western Illinois, Oct. 19; Northern Iowa, Oct. 26; at Western Kentucky, Nov. 2; Southeast Missouri State, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1983.

Nickname: Salukis. **Site:** Carbondale, Ill.

Text by Randy Reinhardt.

Dartmouth linebacker Abel leaves opponents feeling green with envy

By MIKE LURIE

"Flyin' all over the place." In Big Green-speak, that describes the Dartmouth defensive tradition. Mark Abel loves to talk about it. And he loves to practice it.

Sitting still doesn't suit Abel, one of the top linebackers in the Ivy League. And despite residing in the stodgy bastion of tweed-wearing fans and aging stadiums, Abel lets down his hair—it's long enough at times to fall below his helmet, anyway—and keeps moving.

There was his time in 1994 when Abel and several Dartmouth pals spent an academic quarter at UC Santa Barbara. They relived a Dartmouth tradition there, too.

"We were on *The Price is Right*," Abel says. "We just cruised down there (to the studio), like some guys from school had done a year before us, dressed up in our Dartmouth clothes. My roommate, Will Bergman, who's coming back as a receiver, he actually got on the show. He had the check game—when you write out a check to guess the cost of a trip. He lost. He said, 'Man, no one's ever dumb enough to lose the check game.' He was real disappointed. But we jumped up and down anyway."

Then there was last winter, when Abel spent another trimester away from campus, something encouraged by Dartmouth officials. He went back to his hometown, Cincinnati, and worked for a law office. The law school admission test awaits Abel, a history major.

"I like getting things done," he says.

At 6-1 and 220 pounds, size may be all that keeps Abel from moving on to the NFL and following the path of another Dartmouth man with Cincinnati ties, former Bengals linebacker Reggie Williams. But the lack of size hasn't kept Abel from making his mark at Dartmouth, which has a rich history at linebacker.

"They've had some real, real good linebackers through the years," says Carm Cozza, who enters his 32nd season at Yale and is the dean of Ivy League coaches. "You look at Reggie Williams, and he's one of the best we've played against. And they keep a lot of kids there in the summer with their quarter system (of study)."

Yale was not among the recruiting finalists for Abel, who also considered Cornell and Holy Cross. But Cozza, a Cleveland native who played and coached at Miami of Ohio, is very familiar with Moeller High, the Cincinnati high school that groomed Abel. Moeller is known for discipline. And winning.

"The thing that's cool about Moeller is



Mark Abel making a tackle is a familiar sight for Dartmouth coaches: He had 136 last season.

there's such dedication from the coaches," Abel says. "We probably had as many coaches in high school as we do at Dartmouth. A lot of them played at Moeller and they know about the tradition. There's so much pressure to win there, it kind of drives you. When I was a senior, we went 7-3. The year before we went 6-4, and there was some pressure that we might be the first .500 team in Moeller's history. That says something."

Abel's father, William, was a starting quarterback for Cornell in 1966, but he encouraged his son to go where he felt most comfortable.

"When I made the visit to Dartmouth, the coaches really made me feel at home," Abel says.

Since Abel joined the Big Green, things have been uncomfortable for Ivy League offenses. What Abel lacks in size is made up for with tremendous quickness. After recording 101 tackles as a sophomore, Abel easily led the team last season with 136, including 73 solos.

Going into last season's finale, Princeton and Dartmouth were two of four teams that could have finished with a share of the league title. It was a huge game and Abel had 11 tackles, including two for losses, and broke up two passes. The Tigers, though, smartly played for a 10-10 tie that gave them the title over Dartmouth and Cornell.

Those three teams and Penn are strong contenders for the 1996 title. Abel, a tri-captain, wants Dartmouth to regain the domination it had when it won consecutive titles from 1990-92.

"I'm more proud of team achievements,"

PREDICTIONS

ALL-IVY TEAM

OFFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
WR	KEVIN DUFFY, Princeton	5-9/160	Sr.
WR	DAVID RAMIREZ, Columbia	5-10/175	Sr.
TE	JIMMY SEIFERT, Cornell	6-5/229	Sr.
T	RANDY MURFF, Columbia	6-2/295	Sr.
T	BRIAN LARSEN, Dartmouth	6-6/275	Sr.
G	BRIAN WEIDEL, Cornell	6-4/245	Sr.
G	AUSTIN MILLIKEN, Columbia	6-2/270	Sr.
C	JACK HILL, Yale	6-3/245	Sr.
QB	JASON MCCULLOUGH, Brown	6-1/200	Sr.
RB	EION HU, Harvard	5-10/200	Sr.
RB	CHAD LEVITT, Cornell	6-1/227	Sr.

DEFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
E	SCOTT HAPGOOD, Dartmouth	6-2/235	Sr.
T	BRENDAN FINNERAN, Brown	6-0/250	Sr.
T	SETH PAYNE, Cornell	6-4/275	Sr.
E	ROBERT SELZER, Yale	6-4/240	Sr.
LB	RORY WILFORK, Columbia	6-2/235	Sr.
LB	ZACK WALZ, Dartmouth	6-5/210	Jr.
LB	MARK ABEL, Dartmouth	6-1/220	Sr.
CB	DAMANI LEECH, Princeton	5-11/160	Jr.
CB	ROB MASELLA, Yale	6-0/185	Sr.
S	JIMMY ARCHIE, Princeton	5-9/170	Sr.
S	LLOYD LEE, Dartmouth	6-2/205	Jr.

SPECIALISTS

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
K	JEREMIAH GREATHOUSE, Penn	5-9/170	Jr.
P	JOHN LAFFERTY, Yale	5-9/165	Sr.
KR	RENARD CRAIGWELL, Yale	5-9/188	Jr.

PLAYERS OF THE YEAR



OFFENSE:
EION HU
RB, Harvard



DEFENSE:
MARK ABEL
LB, Dartmouth

Abel says. "I don't like to think about the individual numbers that much. The thing that gave me the most fulfillment was leading the league in defense as a team. I like watching some of our linebackers play, like Brian Schmidt and Zack Walz. I love watching them make big hits. They just fly all over the place."

After all, it is a tradition.

Mike Lurie covers the Ivy League for the New Haven (Conn.) Register.

IVY LEAGUE TEAM CHARTS

1. PRINCETON

Coach: Steve Tosches (61-27-2, 9 years).

1995 record: 8-1-1. Ivy: 5-1-1/1st.

Top players: Jimmy Archie, SS; Dale Bartley, DE; Brett Budzinski, QB; Mike Clifford, RB; Kevin Duffy, WR; Tim Greene, LB; Damani Leech, CB; Tom Ludwig, FS; Alex Sierk, K; Marc Washington, RB.

Strengths: As always, running backs and defense.

Washington rushed for 937 yards last fall and was second-team All-Ivy. The defense was stingy enough to make even Pete Carril proud, allowing just 12.4 points per game. Twenty-two interceptions were a big reason.

Weaknesses: Duffy led the league with nine TD catches, but who will throw to him this season? Harry Nakiely, who shared the QB chores with the since-graduated Brock Harvey, is taking the year off for academic reasons. And as good as the defense is, replacing stud linebacker Dave Patterson won't be easy.

Outlook: Princeton seems to get it done even in years when it's not the odds-on favorite. The Tigers didn't like having to wait until the final day to secure the league title last year. What produced the anxiety was a surprising loss to a poor Yale team, at home, in pouring rain on the next-to-last weekend of the season. That won't happen again.

Schedule: at Cornell, Sept. 21; Holy Cross, Sept. 28; Lehigh, Oct. 5; Brown, Oct. 12; at Bucknell, Oct. 19; Harvard, Oct. 26; at Columbia, Nov. 2; Pennsylvania, Nov. 9; at Yale, Nov. 16; Dartmouth, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: Ivy League does not compete in playoffs.

Nickname: Tigers. **Site:** Princeton, N.J.

2. DARTMOUTH

Coach: John Lyons (26-13-1, 4 years).

1995 record: 7-2-1. Ivy: 4-2-1/4th.

Top players: Mark Abel, LB; Jon Aljancic, QB; Trey Bowers, OT; Zach Ellis, WR; Scott Haggood, DE; Brian Larsen, OT; Lloyd Lee, FS; Pete Oberle, FB; Greg Smith, TB; Zack Walz, OLB.

Strengths: Terrific defense is as much a part of the Dartmouth landscape as the White Mountains of New Hampshire. Abel and Walz were first-team all-league linebackers last season, and three of four starters in a secondary that allowed a league-low 279.9 yards per game return. Aljancic, Smith and Oberle are well-acquainted now in the offensive backfield, and the line they'll work behind should be solid.

Weaknesses: The offense is not built around passing, so if the Big Green finds itself needing many points in a hurry, its style doesn't lend itself to quick-fire comebacks. Dartmouth had the league's best running—and worst passing—offense in 1995. The defensive line needs major work, and is there a punter in the house?

Outlook: All that separated Dartmouth from forcing a four-way tie for the league title last year were two seconds and a field goal in its final game, a 10-10 tie with Princeton. Any team returning 16 starters should be a force. Especially quality starters.

Schedule: Pennsylvania, Sept. 21; at Lehigh, Sept. 28; Fordham, Oct. 5; Holy Cross, Oct. 12; Yale, Oct. 19; at Cornell, Oct. 26; at Harvard, Nov. 2; Columbia, Nov. 9; at Brown, Nov. 16; at Princeton, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: Ivy League does not compete in playoffs.

Nickname: Big Green. **Site:** Hanover, N.H.

3. PENNSYLVANIA

Coach: Al Bagnoli (33-6, 4 years; 119-25 overall, 14 years).

1995 record: 7-3. Ivy: 5-2/2nd.

Top players: Aman Abye, RB; Mark DeRosa, QB; Mark Fabish, WR; Tim Gage, LB; Jeremiah Greathouse, K; Matt Julien, G; Mitch Marrow, DL; Chris Osentowski, NG; Larrin Roberston, CB; Jason Scott, RB; Doug Zinser, OT.

Strengths: Lately, football in Philadelphia has been fun, and DeRosa and Fabish should continue the winning tradition. Fabish is a dynamic kick returner who can get the Quakers good field position in a hurry. DeRosa threw for 2,053 yards last season and is 19-3 as the starter. The defensive line is one of the best in the league.

Weaknesses: Nine of the 12 players Penn placed on the All-Ivy first or second team were seniors, so inexperience may be a problem, especially in the secondary.

Outlook: Bagnoli welcomed back only 10 starters last year

and the Quakers finished a strong second in the league. He will have to tap on that same resourcefulness in '96.

Schedule: at Dartmouth, Sept. 21; Colgate, Sept. 28; at Bucknell, Oct. 5; Columbia, Oct. 12; Lehigh, Oct. 19; at Brown, Oct. 26; Yale, Nov. 2; at Princeton, Nov. 9; Harvard, Nov. 16; at Cornell, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: Ivy League does not compete in playoffs.

Nickname: Quakers. **Site:** Philadelphia.

4. CORNELL

Coach: Jim Hoyer (35-25, 6 years).

1995 record: 6-4. Ivy: 5-2/2nd.

Top players: Dave Ahouse, LB; Chris Allen, SS; Steve Busch, WR; Scott Carroll, QB; John Hanson, LB; Eric Krawczyk, WR; Chad Levitt, TB; Seth Payne, DT; John Rodin, K; Jimmy Seifert, TE; Brian Weidel, G.

Strengths: Levitt is the league's two-time defending rushing champion and needs 1,494 yards to surpass Ed Marinaro as Cornell's leading career rusher. Don't laugh: He had 1,428 yards last season. Seifert is not related to former Cornell coach George Seifert of the 49ers, but he is a fine tight end. The defense looks solid.

Weaknesses: For the third straight season, the Big Red will have a new quarterback. Steve Joyce set a school record with 2,255 yards passing last season, but his likely replacement, Carroll, threw just one pass. Only one starter returns on the line.

Outlook: Hoyer has a reputation for producing hard-nosed defensive teams that always are in the title chase.

Unfortunately, the Big Red have been susceptible in recent years to an occasional upset loss in November, too.

Schedule: Princeton, Sept. 21; at Lafayette, Sept. 28; at Buffalo, Oct. 5; at Harvard, Oct. 12; Colgate, Oct. 19; Dartmouth, Oct. 26; Brown, Nov. 2; at Yale, Nov. 9; at Columbia, Nov. 16; Pennsylvania, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: Ivy League does not compete in playoffs.

Nickname: Big Red. **Site:** Ithaca, N.Y.

5. HARVARD

Coach: Tim Murphy (6-14, 2 years; 38-59-1 overall, 9 years).

1995 record: 2-8. Ivy: 1-6/8th.

Top players: Brendan Bibro, DT; Matt Birk, LT; Matt Bradley, CB; Jeff Compas, CB/SS; Tim Fleischer, DE; Eion Hu, TB; Troy Jones, TB; Sean Riley, OT; Colby Skelton, SE; Chris Smith, DE; Jay Snowden, QB.

Strengths: It doesn't get much better than Friday night gatherings in Cambridge and a walk over the Charles River and across the Boston city line on Saturday mornings for Harvard football. Hu, an explosive runner, makes the trip worthwhile. Skelton is a fleet, sure-handed target. Riley, the only Crimson player to start every game over the past two years, leads an experienced offensive line.

Weaknesses: Thanks to graduation, there figure to be five new starting linebackers and two new starters at safety. Snowden, a junior, needs to grow into the QB job. Although 30 lettermen return, this team is not all that deep.

Outlook: Murphy would like to build upon the momentum created by Harvard's dramatic, 22-21 defeat of hated Yale before 35,000 fans in last season's finale. Having Hu in the backfield is a great place to start.

Schedule: at Columbia, Sept. 21; at Bucknell, Sept. 28; Lafayette, Oct. 5; Cornell, Oct. 12; at Holy Cross, Oct. 19; at Princeton, Oct. 26; Dartmouth, Nov. 2; Brown, Nov. 9; at Pennsylvania, Nov. 16; Yale, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: Ivy League does not compete in playoffs.

Nickname: Crimson. **Site:** Cambridge, Mass.

6. BROWN

Coach: Mark Whipple (12-8, 2 years; 60-25 overall, 8 years).

1995 record: 5-5. Ivy: 2-5/16th.

Top players: Ernest Dean, LB; Brendan Finneran, DT; Marquis Jessie, RB; Joe Karcuskie, LB; Matt Kraskouskas, LB/SS; Jason McCullough, QB; Sean Morey, WR; Greg Parker, DB; Rocky Parson, SS; Paul Sloan, G.

Strengths: Brown figures to score a lot of points. McCullough, a senior, is the school's all-time leader in passing yards, completions, touchdowns and total offense. Jessie is the school's all-time leading rusher. Morey caught 34 passes for 454 yards and seven TDs last season to

become the first Brown player to win Ivy League Rookie of the Year honors. Parker and Finneran were first-team all-league selections.

Weaknesses: Inconsistency killed the Bears last year. One week, they allowed 58 points in a loss. Two weeks later, they scored 47 in a win. A new punter and kicker must be found.

Outlook: It's dangerous to pick Brown near the bottom of the league, for there is ample and explosive talent. The defense should be improved with seven starters returning and the input of Don Brown, a former defensive coordinator at Yale who joins Whipple's staff after three successful years as coach at Division III Plymouth (N.H.) State.

Schedule: Yale, Sept. 21; at Rhode Island, Sept. 28; at Colgate, Oct. 5; at Princeton, Oct. 12; Fordham, Oct. 19; Pennsylvania, Oct. 26; at Cornell, Nov. 2; at Harvard, Nov. 9; Dartmouth, Nov. 16; at Columbia, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: Ivy League does not compete in playoffs.

Nickname: Bears. **Site:** Providence, R.I.

7. COLUMBIA

Coach: Ray Tellier (16-52-2, 7 years).

1995 record: 3-6-1. Ivy: 3-4/5th.

Top players: Joe Cormier, FS; Ryan Gabriele, TE; Roy Hanks, DB; Mike Jennings, DE; Jim Jim Jones, WR; Austin Milliken, G; Randy Murf, OT; Jessie Nunn, DB; David Ramirez, WR; Bobby Thomason, QB; Rory Wilfork, OLB; Marcellus Wiley, DE/TB.

Strengths: There is plenty of experience in the receiving game with Ramirez, Jones and Gabriele. Thomason gained valuable experience after an injury sidelined then-starting quarterback Mike Cavanaugh last year. Wilfork and Wiley are all-league defenders. Hanks finished second in I-AA in punt-return average (16.5).

Weaknesses: Cavanaugh is just one of 14 starters who must be replaced. There are a lot of holes to fill. The offense needs to be more balanced as well, since Cavanaugh accounted for 43 percent of its production in '95.

Outlook: It's debatable that any Ivy program is deep enough to overcome injuries, and the Lions had their share last year. They still are subject to a downfall when a few key players are lost, more so than most Ivy schools other than Yale and Harvard. It's hard seeing them finishing much higher than seventh.

Schedule: Harvard, Sept. 21; at Fordham, Sept. 28; at Holy Cross, Oct. 5; Lafayette, Oct. 19; at Yale, Oct. 26; Princeton, Nov. 2; at Dartmouth, Nov. 9; Cornell, Nov. 16; Brown, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: Ivy League does not compete in playoffs.

Nickname: Lions. **Site:** New York.

8. YALE

Coach: Carmen Cozza (177-111-5, 31 years).

1995 record: 3-7. Ivy: 2-5/16th.

Top players: Nate Boxrucker, DB; Renard Craigwell, TB; Craig Freccero, TB/KR; Adam Hernandez, DT; Jack Hill, C; John Lafferty, PK/P; Rob Masella, CB; Allan McCall, G; Tim Reed, FS; Robert Selzer, DE; Bryan Whalen, LB.

Strengths: Not many. Hill may be the league's top center, and Craigwell is a decent running back and explosive kick returner. Lafferty is a good punter who got way too many opportunities to show his skill last year.

Weaknesses: A fierce competition looms at quarterback, where two relatively inexperienced upperclassmen will compete to replace the departed Chris Hetherington. With 35 seniors and 16 starters gone, there will be many green faces.

Outlook: Cozza, entering his 32nd year, knew his 31st Yale team—the '95 Elis—would surprise people if it stayed healthy. It didn't; when Hetherington missed three key league games, much of the offense went with him. It's a rebuilding year for a coach who speaks and acts as committed as ever, despite much speculation that this may be his final year.

Schedule: at Brown, Sept. 21; Connecticut, Sept. 28; at Army, Oct. 5; Bucknell, Oct. 12; at Dartmouth, Oct. 19; Columbia, Oct. 26; at Pennsylvania, Nov. 2; Cornell, Nov. 9; Princeton, Nov. 16; at Harvard, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: Ivy League does not compete in playoffs.

Nickname: Bulldogs. **Site:** New Haven, Conn.

Text by Mike Lurie.

It's a 'man's game'—and Jenkins has proven his worth for Hampton

By NEIL WHITE

Hampton University wide receiver Michael Jenkins would like nothing more than to break the school record for career receptions this season.

He wouldn't mind winning a Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference championship along the way.

Jenkins and the Pirates complete the leap from NCAA Division II to Division I-AA this season, their first year of eligibility for the MEAC title. If the Pirates are to succeed, they'll need excellent performances by Jenkins and other top players.

Jenkins, a 6-4, 200-pound senior from Portsmouth, Va., caught 52 passes, a single-season school record, for 836 yards and seven touchdowns last season. And although the Pirates, who beat three of four MEAC opponents last season, weren't vying for a league title, their players were eligible for all-conference honors. Jenkins' performance earned him a spot on the All-MEAC first team.

Jenkins needs 43 catches and eight touchdown receptions to break Johnny Barnes' school records of 134 catches and 22 scoring receptions. He hopes doing so will help add a championship to his resume.

"Every game we play this year will mean something," Jenkins says. "We're prepared for the challenge. We have a goal we can attain now. We didn't have that last year."

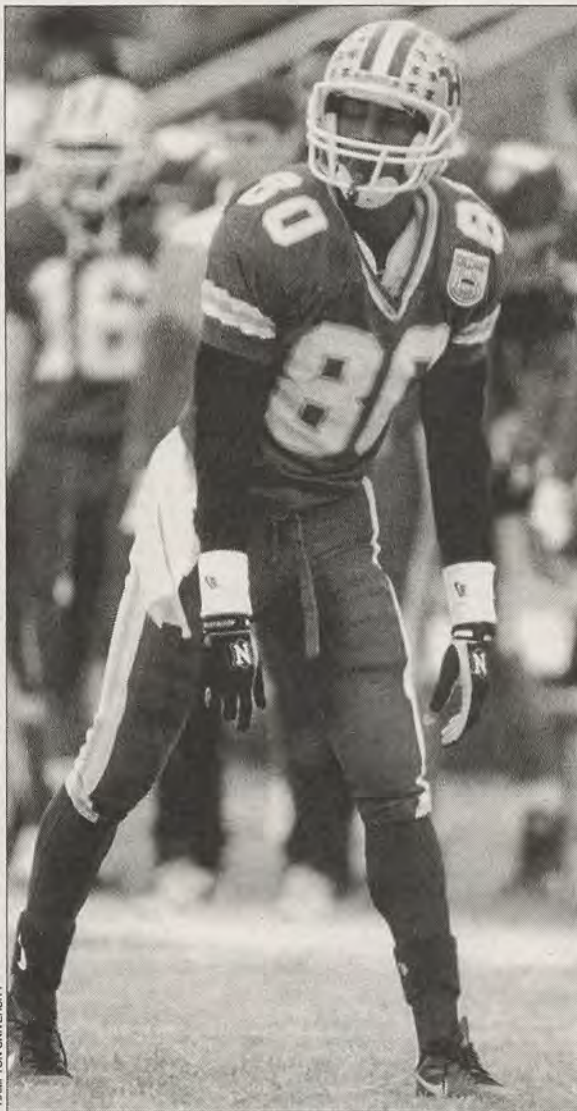
The Pirates' challenge involves facing bigger, stronger and faster opponents, but Jenkins believes they can make the transition. "It's all about putting your mind to it and doing what you've got to do," he says.

The Pirates did that in 1994, when they finished 10-1 and claimed the black college national championship. Jenkins did his part, catching 35 passes for 730 yards and eight touchdowns.

Jenkins, who admires the work of NFL standouts Michael Irvin and Cris Carter, has the ability that could land him in the NFL one day.

"He's got the range, the leverage, tremendous leaping ability," Hampton coach Joe Taylor says. "It's very hard to overthrow him."

And Jenkins isn't afraid of a little contact,



Michael Jenkins caught a school-record 52 passes for 836 yards last season. Numerous school records are within his reach.

either. "I play physical," he says. "I don't like to see anybody beat up on me and get away with it. Football is a man's game, and whoever has the strength mentally and physically is going to win."

Taylor has taken note of Jenkins' willingness to do battle.

"He doesn't mind going across the middle, which means he has some courage," Taylor says.

But Jenkins' best attribute might be confidence. "I feel there is no corner who can stop me," he says. "If you have that opinion, you can't be stopped."

Taylor knows something about great players. He is 39-7-1 in four seasons at Hampton and 100-36-4 in 13 seasons as a coach. Hampton was 8-3 as a I-AA independent last year.

Taylor points to Jenkins' work ethic during the offseason as an example of what makes him an outstanding receiver. Jenkins ran track during the spring to work

PREDICTIONS

ALL-MEAC TEAM

OFFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
WR	MICHAEL JENKINS, Hampton	6-4/200	Sr.
WR	JAMES ADDERLY, Beth.-Cookman	6-2/200	Soph.
WR	ROBERT WILSON, Florida A&M	6-1/185	Sr.
T	RALEIGH ROUNDTREE, S.C. State	6-5/285	Sr.
T	JAMIE NAILS, Florida A&M	6-7/377	Jr.
G	DEMETRIUS BILLIE, Florida A&M	6-3/300	Sr.
G	MATT WILDER, Delaware State	6-3/260	Sr.
C	JOE BROWN, Bethune-Cookman	6-3/265	Sr.
QB	TODD WALKER, Bethune-Cookman	6-4/215	Sr.
RB	TYRONE MAYER, Hampton	6-1/240	Jr.
RB	MILTON SHAW, North Carolina A&T	5-9/190	Sr.

DEFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
E	JIMMY MOORE, S.C. State	6-4/245	Jr.
DT	SHAWN HALL, Howard	6-4/275	Sr.
DT	CEDRIC WHITE, N.C. A&T	6-3/280	Sr.
DE	CHARTRIC DARBY, S.C. State	6-1/230	Sr.
LB	LLOYD BADSON, Delaware State	6-1/230	Sr.
LB	LEVI BAUCOM, Morgan State	6-2/240	Sr.
LB	DAMEON PALMER, S.C. State	6-2/240	Sr.
CB	WILLIE OGLESBY, Beth.-Cookman	6-5/200	Sr.
CB	CORDELL TAYLOR, Hampton	6-0/180	Sr.
S	KARLOS ODUM, Florida A&M	6-2/185	Sr.
S	BILLY JENKINS, Howard	6-1/170	Sr.

SPECIALISTS

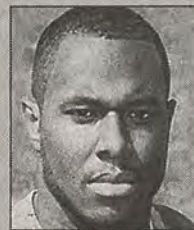
Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
K	JASON DeCUIR, Howard	5-8/160	Sr.
P	RUBEN RUIZ, Howard	5-8/190	Sr.
KR	CEDRIC REDDEN, Howard	5-10, 170 Jr.	

PLAYERS OF THE YEAR



OFFENSE:

MICHAEL JENKINS
WR, Hampton



DEFENSE:

LLOYD BADSON
LB, Delaware State

on his speed.

"Michael knows he's going to be a target, but he's been diligent in the offseason," Taylor says. "He's doing all the things a guy who's marked should do. He'll be prepared."

So should the Pirates.

"Last year we proved we can be a contender. We do belong at this level," Taylor says. "What we accomplished can be a building block for what can happen in the future."

Neil White covers the MEAC for *The State in Columbia, S.C.*

MEAC TEAM CHARTS

1. HAMPTON

Coach: Joe Taylor (39-7-1, 4 years; 100-36-4 overall, 12 years).

1995 record: 8-3 as independent.

Top players: Quincy Bryant, G; T.C. Buckner, DE; Jay Clarke, FS; Darrell Flythe, LB; Michael Jenkins, WR; Tyrone Mayer, RB; Lamont Still, RB; Cordell Taylor, CB; Matt Williams, QB; Quincy Wynn, OT.

Strengths: With Jenkins, Mayer and Still, the Pirates should score their share of points out of the wing-T, especially behind a line that averages 6-6, 302. And with Flythe, Clarke and Taylor on defense, they should keep opponents from scoring.

Weaknesses: The quarterback situation is unsettled unless Williams, who missed most of last season with an injury, returns and delivers on his promise.

Outlook: With 15 returning starters, there's no reason the Pirates, a former Division II power, can't win the MEAC title in their first season of membership.

Schedule: at Clark Atlanta, Sept. 2; at Howard, Sept. 13; North Carolina A&T, Sept. 21; Grambling State (at East Rutherford, N.J.), Sept. 28; Florida A&M (at Indianapolis), Oct. 5; at Delaware State, Oct. 12; at South Carolina State, Oct. 26; Liberty, Nov. 2; Bethune-Cookman, Nov. 9; Norfolk State, Nov. 16; at Morgan State, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Pirates. **Site:** Hampton, Va.

2. SOUTH CAROLINA ST.

Coach: Willie Jeffries (97-43-4, 13 years; 148-98-6 overall, 23 years).

1995 record: 6-4. MEAC: 4-2/3rd.

Top players: Kenny Bynum, RB; Reggie Curry, QB; Chartric Darby, DE; Jermaine Derrickott, LB; Kamar Lee, OL; Bobby McGowens, WR; Jimmy Moore, DE; Derek O'Neal, RB; Dameon Palmer, LB; Darryl Robinson, DB; Raleigh Roundtree, OT.

Strengths: Bynum gets his chance to show if he can run as well as departed All-American Michael Hicks. Bynum will benefit from a seasoned line. Curry, a transfer from Clemson, will lead the offense. The defensive front seven, which features Darby, Palmer and Derrickott, is rugged.

Weaknesses: There's a lack of depth at wide receiver, but that shouldn't be a problem since Jeffries disdains the pass. The secondary lacks depth but boasts a standout in Robinson.

Outlook: Win or lose, nobody tells funnier stories than Jeffries. But it's easy for Jeffries to be jovial since he wins often. This season will be no different.

Schedule: Georgia Southern, Aug. 31; at Charleston Southern, Sept. 7; at Furman, Sept. 14; Johnson C. Smith, Sept. 28; Morgan State, Oct. 5; Bethune-Cookman, Oct. 19; Hampton, Oct. 26; at Delaware State, Nov. 2; Howard, Nov. 9; Florida A&M (at Atlanta), Nov. 16; North Carolina A&T (at Charlotte), Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1982.

Nickname: Bulldogs. **Site:** Orangeburg, S.C.

3. HOWARD

Coach: Steve Wilson (44-34, 7 years).

1995 record: 6-5. MEAC: 2-4/7th.

Top players: Robert Bell, OT; Jason DeCuir, K; Shawn Hall, DT; Anthony Heyward, OT; Billy Jenkins, SS; Clarence Peacock, LB; Cedric Redden, WR/PR; Ruben Ruiz, P; Marco Ward, WR; Ted White, QB.

Strengths: The Bison return the MEAC's best kicking game and special teams. The offensive line averages 6-5, 299, and is experienced. Hall and Jenkins are standout defenders. Nineteen starters are back from a team that took a lead into the fourth quarter of every game but one in '95.

Weaknesses: Howard has talented offensive skill players, but none has emerged. The secondary is young, and overall depth is shallow.

Outlook: If last season's youngsters have matured, and if the injury bug doesn't bite like it did in '95, a title run is possible. The key is White's development.

Schedule: at Marshall, Sept. 7; Hampton, Sept. 13; Virginia State, Sept. 21; at Florida A&M, Sept. 28; Bethune-Cookman, Oct. 12; at Morehouse, Oct. 19; North Carolina A&T, Oct. 26; Norfolk State, Nov. 2; at South Carolina

State, Nov. 9; Morgan State, Nov. 16; Delaware St., Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1993.

Nickname: Bison. **Site:** Washington, D.C.

4. FLORIDA A&M

Coach: Billy Joe (15-8, 2 years; 181-62-4 overall, 22 years).

1995 record: 9-3 (lost to Southern in Heritage Bowl). MEAC: 6-0/1st.

Top players: Demetrius Billie, G; Richard Brooks, CB; Darrin Ford, P; Jamie Nails, OT; Karlos Odum, S; Damian Slaughter, QB; Michael Thornton, DE; Robert Wilson, WR.

Strengths: The secondary returns, along with massive offensive linemen Nails and Billie. And Wilson is back to catch everything in sight. But will that be enough?

Weaknesses: The Rattlers must replace 13 starters, including two All-Americans on defense, the starting offensive backfield and the right side of the offensive line.

Outlook: The defending MEAC champs will have a difficult time repeating. But you can count on Joe, who took the Rattlers to the Heritage Bowl last season, assembling a team that will make some noise and be a factor.

Schedule: at Tennessee State, Aug. 31; Tuskegee, Sept. 7; at Jackson State, Sept. 21; Howard, Sept. 28; Hampton (at Indianapolis), Oct. 5; North Carolina A&T, Oct. 12; at Delaware State, Oct. 19; Morgan State, Nov. 2; at Southern, Nov. 9; South Carolina State (at Atlanta), Nov. 16; Bethune-Cookman (at Tampa), Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1978.

Nickname: Rattlers. **Site:** Tallahassee, Fla.

5. NORTH CAROLINA A&T

Coach: Bill Hayes (52-38, eight years; 141-80-2 overall, 20 years).

1995 record: 4-7. MEAC: 2-4/7th.

Top players: Marvin Bagley, TE/WR; Gregory Coley, OT; Monty Key, P; Milton Shaw, RB; Cedric White, DT.

Strengths: The Aggies will not get pushed around. They're strong on both lines, with Coley leading the offensive front and White pacing the defensive front. The running game, led by Shaw, should pile up lots of yards.

Weaknesses: Finding a quarterback to replace Maseo Bolin will be essential, but there is no shortage of candidates. A lack of depth in the secondary could cause problems against passing teams.

Outlook: Last year's losing season was Hayes' first since 1989. The Aggies, who lost four MEAC games in 1995 by a total of 31 points, should enjoy a reversal of fortunes.

Schedule: at North Carolina Central, Aug. 31; Winston-Salem State, Sept. 7; Fayetteville State, Sept. 14; at Hampton, Sept. 21; at Florida A&M, Oct. 12; Morgan State, Oct. 19; at Howard, Oct. 26; Bethune-Cookman, Nov. 2; at Delaware State, Nov. 9; South Carolina State (at Charlotte), Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1992.

Nickname: Aggies. **Site:** Greensboro, N.C.

6. DELAWARE STATE

Coach: Bill Collick (78-40, 11 years).

1995 record: 6-5. MEAC: 5-1/2nd.

Top players: Lloyd Badson, LB; Lamar Banks, OT; Anthony Carter, LB; Damon Daniels, SE; Dennis Hill, RB; Cedric Jones, DL; Baron Spinner, DB; Matt Wilder, G; Ronnie Wilkerson, LB; Jason Williams, FS.

Strengths: Badson teams with Wilkerson to give the Hornets a solid linebacking corps. Wilder and Banks fortify the left side of the offensive line.

Weaknesses: Delaware State must replace an All-MEAC quarterback, running back and tackle. That's a lot of offense to lose from a team that didn't score a lot of points. In addition, a new punter and kicker must be found.

Outlook: Collick has posted 11 consecutive winning seasons, but he could see that string end this fall.

Schedule: Lock Haven, Sept. 7; at Liberty, Sept. 14; North Carolina Central (at Atlantic City, N.J.), Sept. 21; at Bethune-Cookman, Oct. 5; Hampton, Oct. 12; Florida A&M, Oct. 19; at Morgan State, Oct. 26; South Carolina State, Nov. 2; North Carolina A&T, Nov. 9; at Howard, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Hornets. **Site:** Dover, Del.



Levi Baucom and the rest of the Morgan State defense must better last year's performance.

7. BETHUNE-COOKMAN

Coach: Jack (Cy) McClairn (69-51-3, 14 years).

1995 record: 3-8. MEAC: 2-4/7th.

Top players: James Adderly, WR; Joe Brown, C; Louis Kirchgessner, DL; Willie Oglesby, CB; Michael Womack, LB; Todd Walker, QB.

Strengths: Air McClairn will return to the skies behind the potent combination of Walker to Adderly. The tandem will work behind a strong line. The duo of Womack and Oglesby on defense is equally impressive.

Weaknesses: The Wildcats must develop a ground attack so foes can't focus on the pass. The defense, particularly the line, needs to toughen up.

Outlook: Bethune-Cookman will scare a lot of teams, but the Wildcats will remain harmless until they develop consistency.

Schedule: Savannah State, Aug. 31; Morris Brown, Sept. 7; at Morgan State, Sept. 14; Norfolk State, Sept. 21; Delaware State, Oct. 5; at Howard, Oct. 12; at South Carolina State, Oct. 19; Albany State, Oct. 26; at North Carolina A&T, Nov. 2; at Hampton, Nov. 9; Florida A&M (at Tampa), Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Wildcats. **Site:** Daytona Beach, Fla.

8. MORGAN STATE

Coach: Stump Mitchell (first year).

1995 record: 1-10. MEAC: 0-6/7th.

Top players: Levi Baucom, LB; Albert Brady, NG; Otis Covington, QB (moved from WR); Charles Fields, CB; Na'im Greene, RB; Shane Griffiths, K; Micheal Guy, CB; James Hall, LB; Fred Jenkins, SS; Levar Patterson, LB; Willie Thompson, NT.

Strengths: Ten starters return from a defense that allowed 39.9 points per game. Still, Baucom and Hall are skilled enough to help Morgan State trim that number.

Weaknesses: The Bears—10-45 combined the past five seasons—lost a lot of offense, and that doesn't bode well for a team renown for bad defense. Griffiths is a good kicker, but since the Bears didn't reach the end zone that much, he almost had as many field goals (nine) as extra points (15).

Outlook: Mitchell, who starred in the NFL with the Cardinals, has his hands full trying to resurrect this program, but he's a winner. But don't expect any miracles this season.

Schedule: Central State (at Columbus, Ohio), Aug. 31; Bethune-Cookman, Sept. 14; Liberty, Sept. 21; at Cheyney, Sept. 28; at South Carolina State, Oct. 5; at North Carolina A&T, Oct. 19; Delaware State, Oct. 26; at Florida A&M, Nov. 2; at Texas Southern, Nov. 9; at Hampton, Nov. 16; Hampton, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Bears. **Site:** Baltimore.

Text by Neil White.

A not-so-nutty decision puts Cherry on top at Murray State

By WENDY SMITH

The relationship between quarterback and coach goes much deeper at Murray State than it does at most schools.

The bond dates to 1991, when Houston Nutt was an assistant at the University of Arkansas and Mike Cherry was a highly touted prep quarterback in Texarkana, Ark.

Nutt, the Razorbacks' wide receivers coach at the time, persuaded Cherry—who was being pursued by Texas, UCLA, Florida, Oklahoma State and Arkansas—to cast his lot with the home-state school.

Cherry did, redshirting his first season in Fayetteville and playing sparingly as a freshman in 1993. Entering his sophomore season, he was the No. 1 quarterback on the depth chart.

Meanwhile, the Arkansas coaching staff had come to resemble a revolving door. Coach Jack Crowe was fired the day after the Razorbacks lost their '92 opener to The Citadel, and his replacement, Joe Kines, was replaced by Danny Ford three days after the Razorbacks finished the season a disappointing 3-7-1. Two weeks after Ford took over, Nutt left to become coach at Murray State.

"Danny Ford came in with an option-type attack, and he wanted to move me to tight end," says Cherry, who played little in his two seasons at Arkansas. "I always played quarterback; I felt my position was quarterback."

Cherry, who had never played another position, wanted out.

"I started to look for somewhere to transfer," he says. "I wanted to transfer to a place where I could play football again. The first place I looked was Murray State. Coach Nutt, knowing the type person he was, the character he had, the similar things he had been through at Arkansas—I knew he could relate to what I was looking for. It fit me to a T."

Like Cherry, Nutt had been a hotshot quarterback who began his college career at Arkansas. And like Cherry, he transferred after two unhappy years, to Oklahoma State.

"A lot of things he did were very similar," Nutt says. "He came out highly recruited. We both got into an offense that didn't fit the person. (Cherry is) a thrower. Murray is a perfect place for him."



Mike Cherry followed former Arkansas assistant Houston Nutt to Murray State. The move paid off for both last season.

Together, Nutt and Cherry have helped turn the Racers' program from Ohio Valley Conference doormat into one of the best in Division I-AA. In the three seasons before Nutt's arrival, Murray State was 7-26; in the three seasons since, it is 20-13.

Despite the strong bond between player and coach, Cherry had to earn the starting job when he arrived at Murray State.

"He earned the respect from hard work, and he was accepted by the players. He really played super all year long," Nutt says. "His confidence built and he got better as the season went on."

"His presence is so positive. He likes to lead, and they will follow."

Murray State gave Cherry something he never would have gotten at Arkansas: the freedom to fully exhibit his skills as a quarterback. Because of his size, Cherry (6-4, 220) is considered a pro prospect.

"(Nutt) really gave me that freedom," says Cherry, who was 135-of-225 for 2,084 yards and 16 touchdowns last year. "I was just very fortunate to have had such a good season, a good group of guys around me that had confidence in my ability to play football."

The Racers set a school record for wins by going 11-0 last year. Coming on the heels of a 5-6 record in 1994, it was the biggest turnaround in Division I-AA. The Racers advanced to the I-AA playoffs for the first time since 1986.

Cherry, who earned first-team all-league

PREDICTIONS

ALL-OHIO VALLEY TEAM

OFFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
WR	DEMETRIC MOSTILLER, Middle Tenn.	5-7/160	Sr.
WR	GARY WILLIAMS, Austin Peay	6-0/175	Sr.
TE	CARLOS GETER, Middle Tenn.	6-2/225	Sr.
T	MARK ROBINSON, Murray State	6-3/270	Jr.
T	RICHARD COURE, UT Martin	6-6/250	Jr.
G	MIKE NIELSEN, SE Missouri State	6-2/285	Sr.
G	ANDY MASSEY, Middle Tenn.	6-3/270	Sr.
C	BRIAN COX, Murray State	6-0/250	Soph.
QB	MIKE CHERRY, Murray State	6-4/220	Sr.
RB	DAVID McCANN, Murray State	5-11/190	Sr.
RB	WILLIAM MURRELL, E. Kentucky	5-8/183	Sr.

DEFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
E	ANTHONY HICKS, Middle Tenn.	6-2/208	Sr.
T	ANTHONY McCORD, Middle Tenn.	6-0/230	Sr.
T	ANTHONY HUTCH, Murray State	6-4/275	Sr.
E	DAVID HOELSCHER, E. Kentucky	6-5/234	Jr.
LB	MICHAEL HOLCEY, Tennessee St.	6-3/235	Sr.
LB	TONY McCOMBS, E. Kentucky	6-2/235	Sr.
LB	RONNIE MERRITT, Murray State	6-2/225	Jr.
CB	WILLIAM HAMPTON, Murray State	6-1/175	Sr.
CB	ROBERT TAYLOR, Tenn. Tech	6-0/185	Sr.
S	GREG KLUND, SE Missouri State	5-11/170	Sr.
S	CHRIS GUYTON, E. Kentucky	6-3/185	Sr.

SPECIALISTS

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
K	RYAN KELLY, Tennessee Tech	5-9/180	Sr.
P	BRANDON THOMAS, Middle Tenn.	6-0/190	Jr.
KR	JON RILEY, SE Missouri State	6-2/185	Sr.

PLAYERS OF THE YEAR



OFFENSE:

MIKE CHERRY
QB, Murray State



DEFENSE:

WILLIAM HAMPTON
CB, Murray State

honors, is constantly asked if he is sorry about transferring from the high-profile Southeastern Conference to the lesser-known OVC.

"My answer is no," Cherry says. "We had an 11-0 season. We won the Ohio Valley Conference."

"It was a special time for me. I came here looking for several things—to have fun playing football again and to win. I outlasted my dreams for this season. I couldn't have made a better decision."

Wendy Smith covers Ohio Valley Conference football for the Nashville Banner.

OHIO VALLEY TEAM CHARTS

1. MURRAY STATE

Coach: Houston Nutt (20-14, 3 years).
1995 record: 11-1 (lost in first round of playoffs). OVC: 8-0/1st.
Top players: Kirk Barnett, DE; Mike Cherry, QB; Brian Cox, C; Renardo Hampton, CB; William Hampton, CB; Anthony Hutch, DT/DE; Eric Mathies, DL; David McCann, RB; Ronnie Merritt, LB; Mark Robinson, OT; Reginald Swinton, WR; Kenny Thomas, DB; Chris Vaughn, LB, Soph.
Strengths: The Racers are riding the momentum of last year's perfect regular season and figure to repeat as OVC champions. Murray returns a talented offensive unit led by Cherry and McCann. The William Hampton-led defense was among the best in I-AA, allowing just 253.3 yards (No. 6 in the nation) and 10.4 points (third best) per game.
Weaknesses: The team must replace tailback Derrick Cullors, who rushed for a school-record 1,765 yards and 16 touchdowns. The Racers also have to fill holes vacated by three defensive linemen.
Outlook: Nutt believes he has built a championship-caliber program. And the Racers hope to prove that last year's surprise season—they were pegged to finish sixth in the OVC—was no fluke.
Schedule: Western Kentucky, Sept. 7; Southern Illinois, Sept. 14; at SE Missouri, Sept. 21; Middle Tennessee, Sept. 28; Austin Peay, Oct. 5; at UT Martin, Oct. 12; at Eastern Illinois, Oct. 19; Tennessee Tech, Nov. 2; at Eastern Kentucky, Nov. 9; Tennessee Tech, Nov. 16.
Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1995.
Nickname: Racers. Site: Murray, Ky.

2. EASTERN KENTUCKY

Coach: Roy Kidd (266-94-8, 32 years).
1995 record: 9-3 (lost in first round of playoffs). OVC: 7-1/2nd.
Top players: Brandyon Brantley, G; Britt Bowen, LB; Daymon Carter, RB; Steve Gulash, DT; Chris Guyton, FS; David Hoelscher, DE; Tony McCombs, LB; William Murrell, TB; Roger Orlandini, OT; Son Tran, C; Bobby Washington, SE, Jr.
Strengths: As always, the Colonels are solid in all phases. McCombs, Hoelscher and Guyton lead a defense that returns seven starters. Eastern also has the league's top two returning rushers in Murrell and Carter, who combined for more than 1,600 yards and 26 touchdowns.
Weaknesses: Senior quarterback Greg Couch, a bit rusty after spending the past two seasons on the bench behind Division I-A transfers, returns to a starting role. The schedule includes five teams that finished ranked in I-AA's Top 25.
Outlook: The Colonels will aim for their 17th trip to the playoffs in 19 years. They have the advantage of playing defending OVC champion Murray State at home.
Schedule: Troy State, Sept. 7; at Western Kentucky, Sept. 14; Appalachian State, Sept. 21; Tennessee Tech, Sept. 28; SE Missouri, Oct. 5; at Middle Tennessee, Oct. 19; at UT Martin, Oct. 26; Tennessee State, Nov. 2; Murray State, Nov. 9; at Austin Peay, Nov. 16; at Eastern Illinois, Nov. 23.
Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1995.
Nickname: Colonels. Site: Richmond, Ky.

3. MIDDLE TENNESSEE

Coach: Boots Donnelly (125-71-1, 17 years).
1995 record: 7-4. OVC: 6-2/3rd.
Top players: Carlos Geter, TE; Anthony Hicks, DE; Jarvis Jolly, OT; Andy Massey, G; Anthony McCord, DL; Lebrion McGill, TB; Demetric Mostiller, WR; Jonathan Quinn, QB; Brandon Thomas, P; Reggie Upshaw, DT; Toby Walker, WR; Kris White, ILB, Jr.
Strengths: The Blue Raiders lost only six seniors from a team that finished the season ranked No. 25 in I-AA. Their young defense allowed seven or fewer points in five of eight league games. Mostiller, who averaged 25.2 yards per catch, is among the best wide receivers in school history.
Weaknesses: Brigham Lyons, who compiled 1,687 all-purpose yards, will be missed. The Raiders would like to improve their kicking (they managed only seven FGs in '95).
Outlook: Headed for I-A in 1998, the Raiders would like to win another OVC title and make a run at the I-AA crown. The talent appears to be on hand to make that a possibility.
Schedule: at Louisiana Tech, Aug. 31; at Tennessee State, Sept. 7; UT Chattanooga, Sept. 14; at Murray State, Sept. 28; at Jacksonville (Ala.) State, Oct. 5; Austin Peay, Oct. 12; Eastern Kentucky, Oct. 19; at SE Missouri, Oct. 26; at UT Martin, Nov. 9; Eastern Illinois, Nov. 16; Tennessee Tech, Nov. 23.
Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1994.
Nickname: Blue Raiders. Site: Murfreesboro, Tenn.

4. EASTERN ILLINOIS

Coach: Bob Spoo (52-49-1, 9 years).
1995 record: 10-2 (lost in first round of playoffs). Gateway: 5-1/T1st.
Top players: Chris Brown, CB; LeMont Clark, G; Chris Dunkle, G; Tom Hess, WR; Travis Hunerberg, OT; Brian McGavock, DL; Hasheem Rasheed, FS; Chris Westenberger, C; George Wilson, CB; Rodney Wilson, LB, Jr.
Strengths: The Panthers return 13 starters from a team that made its first playoff appearance since 1989. Eastern has a mega-sized and veteran offensive line (only one starter missing), a unit manned by—are you ready for this?—300-, 319-, 329- and 345-pounders. Six starters return to the defense, which ranked 10th in the nation against the run.
Weaknesses: Running back Willie High, who ran for 1,458 yards last year, and linebacker Tim Carver, the school's all-time leading tackler, are gone. The Panthers have no quarterback who has taken a snap in I-AA competition.
Outlook: Eastern Illinois, late of the Gateway Conference, should make itself at home in the OVC—and could even contend for the league title in its first year.
Schedule: at Western Michigan, Aug. 29; Indiana State, Sept. 14; at UT Martin, Sept. 28; Western Illinois, Oct. 12; Murray State, Oct. 19; at Tennessee Tech, Oct. 26; at Austin Peay, Nov. 2; at SE Missouri, Nov. 9; at Middle Tennessee, Nov. 16; Eastern Kentucky, Nov. 23.
Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1995.
Nickname: Panthers. Site: Charleston, Ill.

5. SE MISSOURI STATE

Coach: John Mumford (27-39, 6 years).
1995 record: 5-6. OVC: 5-3/4th.
Top players: Brian Burton, LB; Durand Frierson, C; Bobby Haggerty, LB; Greg Klund, S; Tony McDonald, RB; Mike Nielsen, G; Jon Riley, WR/KR; Angel Rubio, DL; Ronnie Smith, DB; Terrance Sterling, LB, Soph.
Strengths: The defense returns eight starters, including Haggerty (an OVC-leading 136 tackles last year). The offensive line is deep and experienced.
Weaknesses: The Indians must rebuild their entire backfield, with 1,000-yard rusher Dione Tyler being the biggest loss. Probable starting quarterback Justin Martini threw only 20 passes last season.
Outlook: Despite being racked by injuries in 1995, Southeast managed a fourth-place league finish. A healthier unit could mean better things, but there are too many questions offensively to be overly hopeful.
Schedule: at Illinois State, Sept. 14; Murray State, Sept. 21; Austin Peay, Sept. 28; at Eastern Kentucky, Oct. 5; at Tennessee Tech, Oct. 12; at Arkansas State, Oct. 19; Middle Tennessee, Oct. 26; UT Martin, Nov. 2; Eastern Illinois, Nov. 9; at Southern Illinois, Nov. 16; at Tennessee State, Nov. 23.
Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.
Nickname: Indians. Site: Cape Girardeau, Mo.

6. UT MARTIN

Coach: Don McLeary (49-63, 10 years).
1995 record: 5-6. OVC: 4-4/5th.
Top players: Damon Atwater, RB; Richard Coure, OT; Lenny Harris, WR; Nikki Jackson, RB/WR; Jeff McCrone, QB; Deumaine Reeder, WR; Antonio Strobridge, DE; Jon Swift, MLB; Will Woody, C, Sr.
Strengths: The Skyhawks set OVC records for passing yardage, attempts and completions with the installation of the West Coast offense. McCrone is back to direct the attack after throwing for 2,519 yards and 17 touchdowns. Jackson and Harris combined for 116 receptions.
Weaknesses: UT Martin must develop a running game (Jackson's 466 yards led the team in '95) to complement its passing. Defensively, the Skyhawks need to replace three secondary starters and their top lineman, Brad Godwin.
Outlook: After a promising start last season, UT Martin dropped four consecutive games in the late going. The Skyhawks have some talent returning, especially on offense, but breaking into the league's top tier will be tough.
Schedule: at Southern Illinois, Sept. 7; SW Missouri State, Sept. 21; Eastern Illinois, Sept. 28; at Tennessee Tech, Oct. 5; Murray State, Oct. 12; at Tennessee State, Oct. 19; Eastern Kentucky, Oct. 26; at SE Missouri, Nov. 2; Middle Tennessee, Nov. 9; at Samford, Nov. 16; at Austin Peay, Nov. 23.
Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.
Nickname: Skyhawks. Site: Martin, Tenn.

7. TENNESSEE STATE

Coach: L.C. Cole (first year).
1995 record: 2-9. OVC: 1-7/7th.
Top players: Calvin Davenport, TB; Brian Davis, QB; Ryan Falker, LB; Clifford Green, CB; Jarrick Hillery, TB; Michael Holcey, LB/DE; Jerome Hurd, WR; Thomas Jackson, LB; Lamarr Wallace, FB; Robby Williams, QB, Jr.
Strengths: Cole, assistant head coach at the University of Cincinnati last season, brings an upbeat, disciplined approach to a team that hit rock bottom a year ago. Five starters, led by the formidable Holcey, return to a defense that was better than the numbers it put up. Hurd (53 receptions, six TDs) and Hillery (644 yards rushing as a freshman) are offensive bright spots.
Weaknesses: The Tigers' roster is made up largely of freshmen and sophomores. State was its own worst enemy last season, turning the ball over a league-high 38 times.
Outlook: Don't expect a miracle, but Cole will have his charges putting forth a strong effort. Anything close to a .500 season would be a monumental first step for a team with recruits from three coaching regimes.
Schedule: Florida A&M, Aug. 31; Middle Tennessee, Sept. 7; Jackson State (at Memphis), Sept. 14; Southern (at Atlanta), Sept. 28; Lane, Oct. 5; UT Martin, Oct. 19; Austin Peay, Oct. 26; at Eastern Kentucky, Nov. 2; at Tennessee Tech, Nov. 9; at Murray State, Nov. 16; SE Missouri, Nov. 23.
Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1986.
Nickname: Tigers. Site: Nashville, Tenn.

8. TENNESSEE TECH

Coach: Mike Hennigan (first year).
1995 record: 3-8. OVC: 2-6/7th.
Top players: David Clem, C; Terry Copeland, RB, Fr.; Mondreka Hendrix, WR; Ryan Kelly, K; Mike Lytle, OT; Trent McNaull, LB; Marcus Patton, DE; Jamie Sander, QB; Demond Stone, WR; Robert Taylor, CB, Sr.
Strengths: Eight starters return to a traditionally strong defensive unit that had an off year in 1995. Taylor is fifth in school history with 13 interceptions. Three starters are back to anchor the offensive line.
Weaknesses: The Golden Eagles must replace tailback Michael Penix, their No. 2 career rusher. Tech also lost its top four receivers and the team's leading tackler.
Outlook: Former assistant Hennigan has brought in several new assistants and a new attitude. Improvement is expected over last year, but any gains probably won't be dramatic.
Schedule: at Appalachian State, Sept. 7; Samford, Sept. 21; at Eastern Kentucky, Sept. 28; UT Martin, Oct. 5; SE Missouri, Oct. 12; at Austin Peay, Oct. 19; Eastern Illinois, Oct. 26; at Murray State, Nov. 2; Tennessee State, Nov. 9; at Illinois State, Nov. 16; at Middle Tennessee, Nov. 23.
Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.
Nickname: Golden Eagles. Site: Cookeville, Tenn.

9. AUSTIN PEAY

Coach: Roy Gregory (16-39, 5 years).
1995 record: 3-8. OVC: 2-6/7th.
Top players: Jacob Dickson, FB; Charles Hall, RB; Phillip Hancock, ILB; Steve Haywood, G; Chris Horton, RB; Michael Hudson, OT; Bobby Montgomery, DT; Carlos Payne, DE; Alonzo Porter, TE; Gary Williams, WR; Thomas Williams, ILB, Jr.
Strengths: Gregory has 10 starters returning on offense, including Gary Williams (51 catches last year). The Governors also return their top two linebackers, Hancock and Thomas Williams, both of whom had more than 100 tackles in '95.
Weaknesses: Austin Peay lost seven starters on defense, most notably four in the secondary. The Governors need a quarterback to emerge, too.
Outlook: Gregory is taking a get-tough approach to the season. He is taking over control of a defense that allowed 392 yards and 31 points per game in '95. The offense, which turned the ball over 31 times, should be much improved.
Schedule: at Arkansas State, Sept. 7; at Samford, Sept. 14; Western Kentucky, Sept. 21; at Southeast Missouri State, Sept. 28; at Murray State, Oct. 5; at Middle Tennessee, Oct. 12; Tennessee Tech, Oct. 19; at Tennessee State, Oct. 26; Eastern Illinois, Nov. 2; Eastern Kentucky, Nov. 16; UT Martin, Nov. 23.
Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.
Nickname: Governors. Site: Clarksville, Tenn.

Text by Wendy Smith.

Lehigh's Abdullah comes through for his coach, on and off the field

By BILL DOYLE

Lehigh running back Rabih Abdullah may be the only college football player who has a coach as a teammate.

Kevin Higgins is his football coach and his intramural basketball teammate. On both teams, Higgins' goal is the same—get the ball to Abdullah.

That strategy has paid off with three consecutive titles—back-to-back intramural crowns on the basketball court in 1995 and '96 and a Patriot League football championship last season.

Abdullah led the league in scoring and rushing for the 8-3 Engineers last season. He rushed for a school-record 1,536 yards, and his 139.6 yards per game ranked ninth in Division I-AA.

Last fall, Higgins wanted a more balanced offensive attack and Abdullah (6-1, 210) was the answer. "We worked hard on finding ways of getting the ball in Rabih's hands," Higgins says, "not only running but catching as well."

Abdullah had 42 receptions and his versatility produced a number of highlights:

- In a 34-23 victory over Cornell, he rushed for 266 yards and a school-record five touchdowns.

- He scored the winning touchdown on a 65-yard screen pass in a 30-23 victory over Bucknell.

- Against Holy Cross, Abdullah gained 250 total yards (193 rushing, 57 receiving) as Lehigh cruised, 51-21.

- In the last game of the season, Abdullah rushed for 223 yards as Lehigh defeated rival Lafayette, 37-30, in double overtime to clinch the league title.

And then, of course, came basketball. Higgins and Abdullah played together again this past spring, winning another intramural championship. After Abdullah's sophomore season, in which he rushed for 915 yards, Higgins made the running back his first pick for his basketball team.

"I wanted to continue to get him in a competitive mode in the offseason," Higgins says, "so that he could continue that way when the season began."

Abdullah was the team's shooting guard and best player, while Higgins played point guard. "It was fun," Abdullah says. "We have a good relationship. When he plays, he's like a coach. You can't take the coach out of him."

Abdullah was known more for basketball than football at Abraham Clark High School in Roselle, N.J. He was an all-league basketball player and played more linebacker than running back. Higgins didn't see Abdullah play football in person, but he did see him play basketball in his senior season.

"There was a loose ball under the basket," says Higgins, a former high school basketball coach. "Four guys were going down for the ball. Rabih went down, picked it up and from a squatting position exploded up and jammed it."



LEHIGH UNIVERSITY

Rabih Abdullah has helped his teams win the Patriot title—and two intramural basketball crowns.

Higgins also saw Abdullah pin a layup against the backboard from behind by catching an opponent who was five yards ahead of him.

"I saw those two plays and I was convinced he had a chance to excel at our level just on pure athleticism," Higgins said.

Abdullah didn't think he would make it as a 6-1 small forward, so he went to Lehigh to play football. He didn't play as a freshman, but Higgins named Abdullah the starter three days before the '94 season opener.

"I'm very surprised," Abdullah says. "I never thought I could play another sport besides basketball. My friends back home always tell me I should have played basketball, but I wouldn't trade playing football for anything. I'm having too much fun."

Abdullah doesn't have great speed, so he relies more on his leg strength. He developed his strength by jogging over South Mountain, which separates Lehigh's Bethlehem, Pa., campus and the athletic facilities. He started the regime the summer before his junior year. Four times a week, he would jog the three miles over the mountain in the mid-morning heat from the campus to the track—where he would run some more.

In '96, Abdullah will be a marked man. Last fall, opponents couldn't key on him because of teammates Bob Aylsworth, the league's top-rated quarterback, and Brian Klingerman, who had 77 receptions for 1,040 yards.

"Many times his successful runs (in '95) were when we spread teams out and (opponents) removed a linebacker so they could defend against the pass," Higgins says. "Rabih had one less guy to beat and I think

PREDICTIONS

ALL-PATRIOT TEAM

OFFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
WR	BRIAN HOPKINS, Holy Cross	6-3/205	Jr.
WR	QUINCY MILLER, Lafayette	6-2/230	Sr.
TE	BOBBY ANDREWS, Holy Cross	6-3/230	Soph.
T	BRIAN BARTELLE, Lehigh	6-3/295	Sr.
T	JACK DURKIN, Colgate	6-3/277	Sr.
G	DOUG YATES, Lehigh	6-2/275	Sr.
G	MIKE ZIMIROWSKI, Holy Cross	6-4/285	Sr.
C	CORY BAILEY, Fordham	6-3/275	Jr.
QB	JIM FOX, Bucknell	6-5/226	Sr.
RB	RABIH ABDULLAH, Lehigh	6-1/210	Sr.
RB	RICH LEMON, Bucknell	5-8/180	Sr.

DEFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
E	HUNTER ADAMS, Bucknell	6-5/250	Jr.
T	DERIK LIBERATORE, Colgate	6-4/231	Sr.
T	CARL BARBERA, Fordham	6-3/255	Sr.
E	DAVID SUNDERLAND, Lehigh	6-4/272	Sr.
LB	DAVID STREETER, Holy Cross	6-1/220	Sr.
LB	JACK PIERACINI, Fordham	6-1/205	Jr.
LB	DAN BENGLE, Lafayette	6-5/240	Jr.
CB	MARCUS CAMERON, Colgate	6-0/181	Sr.
CB	TADJI CHATTMAN, Lafayette	6-0/180	Sr.
S	B.J. GALLIS, Lafayette	6-3/210	Sr.
S	MARK MILLER, Lehigh	6-1/180	Sr.

SPECIALISTS

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
K	RICH MILLER, Bucknell	6-1/200	Sr.
P	BEN TALBOTT, Lehigh	6-2/190	Sr.
KR	LARRY LEITH, Fordham	5-9/168	Jr.

PLAYERS OF THE YEAR



OFFENSE:

RABIH ABDULLAH
RB, Lehigh



DEFENSE:

DAVID STREETER
LB, Holy Cross

that meant a lot."

Aylsworth and Klingerman have graduated, leaving Abdullah—who needs 738 yards to become Lehigh's career rushing leader—to carry the load.

"Our concern this year is if we're not able to throw the ball, is he going to run the ball as effectively as last year? That remains to be seen," Higgins says. "He's still just learning the game. I think Rabih will continue to get better. His best days are ahead of him."

Bill Doyle covers Holy Cross football for the Worcester (Mass.) Telegram & Gazette.

PATRIOT TEAM CHARTS

1. LEHIGH

Coach: Kevin Higgins (13-8-1, 2 years).

1995 record: 8-3. Patriot: 5-0/1st.

Top players: Rabi Abdullah, RB; Brian Bartelle, OT; Deron Braswell, WR; Aaron Brown, QB; Lance Eckenrode, LB; Eric Johnson, DL; Nick Martucci, DL; Curtis May, CB; David Merrifield, DL; David Meurer, TE; Mark Miller, DB; Tahir Rivers, CB; Jason Streeter, WR; David Sunderland, DL; Ben Talbott, P; Doug Yates, G.

Strengths: The skill positions. Abdullah not only led the league with 1,536 yards rushing, but he's one of four returning Engineers who caught at least 30 passes a year ago. Nine starters return on defense, including leading tackler Eckenrode.

Weaknesses: The pass rush was nearly non-existent in Bethlehem last fall (only 14 sacks). Lehigh also allowed 246 yards rushing per game, next to last in the league.

Outlook: With five tough road games, the Engineers could have a better team than last year but not match their 8-3 record. Their home game against Bucknell could decide the league title. Last year, Lehigh scored twice in the fourth quarter on the road to hand the Bison its sole league loss, 30-23.

Schedule: at Delaware, Sept. 7; Fordham, Sept. 14; Buffalo, Sept. 21; Dartmouth, Sept. 28; at Princeton, Oct. 5; at New Hampshire, Oct. 12; at Pennsylvania, Oct. 19; Bucknell, Nov. 2; at Holy Cross, Nov. 9; Colgate, Nov. 16; at Lafayette, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1979.

Nickname: Engineers. **Site:** Bethlehem, Pa.

2. BUCKNELL

Coach: Tom Gadd (7-4, 1 year).

1995 record: 7-4. Patriot: 4-1/2nd.

Top players: Hunter Adams, DE; Jack Boyle, SS; Jim Fox, QB; Michael Haggerty, LB; Willie Hill, LB; Rich Lemon, TB; Brandon Little, LB; Rich Miller, P/K; Mariusz Misiec, OT; Oji Perkins, WR.

Strengths: The entire offensive backfield returns. Lemon has run for nearly 2,800 yards the past two years, and Fox threw for 2,199 yards and 10 touchdowns last fall, with only one interception in his last five games. The secondary is deep, talented and experienced.

Weaknesses: Seven defensive starters return, but the Bison must replace end Ed Burman, the league's defensive player of the year, and leading tackler Rob Bird, a line-backer. Graduation depleted the receiving corps and offensive line.

Outlook: If the inexperienced receivers and offensive line can mature quickly enough for the Bison to establish a passing game to take some of the pressure off Lemon, Bucknell could win eight games for the first time since the 1951 team went 9-0. Seven of the team's 11 games are at home, but key league contests against Lehigh and Lafayette will be on the road.

Schedule: Towson State, Sept. 14; William & Mary, Sept. 21; Harvard, Sept. 28; Pennsylvania, Oct. 5; at Yale, Oct. 12; Princeton, Oct. 19; at Holy Cross, Oct. 26; at Lehigh, Nov. 2; at Lafayette, Nov. 9; Fordham, Nov. 16; Colgate, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Bison. **Site:** Lewisburg, Pa.

3. LAFAYETTE

Coach: Bill Russo (88-70-4, 15 years; 103-85-4 overall, 18 years).

1995 record: 4-6-1. Patriot: 3-2/3rd.

Top players: Dan Bengel, LB; Tadj Chatman, CB; B.J. Gallis, SS; Craig Hansen, DE; Shawn McHale, QB; Quincy Miller, SE; Leonard Moore, TB; Mark Sessanta, DE; Todd Stahlnecker, FB; Jay Urban, LB.

Strengths: The entire offensive backfield and all the wide receivers return. McHale has a pair of 1,700-yard passing seasons and 20 touchdowns on his resume. After Moore recovered from an ankle injury, he ran for 582 yards and seven touchdowns in Lafayette's five league games to earn the league's rookie of the year award.

Weaknesses: Despite Moore's individual success, the Leopards averaged a league-worst 2.9 yards per rush. The offensive line will have two new tackles. Seven starters



Senior tailback Rich Lemon has gained almost 2,800 yards combined the past two seasons for Bucknell.

return on defense, but the team's top two tacklers are gone.

Outlook: Russo doesn't mind that his Leopards have been picked to finish third in the league. He relishes the underdog role. Lafayette has talent but lacks the superstar-caliber player Lehigh and Bucknell have.

Schedule: Millersville, Sept. 14; Northeastern, Sept. 21; Cornell, Sept. 28; at Harvard, Oct. 5; at Fordham, Oct. 12; at Columbia, Oct. 19; at Colgate, Oct. 26; at Army, Nov. 2; Bucknell, Nov. 9; Holy Cross, Nov. 16; Lehigh, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Leopards. **Site:** Easton, Pa.

4. FORDHAM

Coach: Nick Quartaro (4-17-1, 2 years).

1995 record: 4-6-1. Patriot: 2-3/4th.

Top players: Cory Bailey, C; Carl Barbera, DT; Tim Baumgardner, LB; Mark Bourke, OL; Barry Cantrell, P; Jim Ciarlante, LB; Pat Destro, DB; Larry Leith, WR/KR; Dan Madine, QB; Jon Nelson, TE; Jack Pieracini, LB; Andre Robinson, RB; Kevin Szocik, QB.

Strengths: Leith (31 catches, 461 yards) leads an experienced, talented receiving corps. All three linebackers return, including Pieracini and Baumgardner, both second-team all-league picks in '95. Barbera is the league's top returning sacker (9.5).

Weaknesses: With three-year starter Joe Moorhead graduated, the quarterback position lacks experience. Szocik, a senior, is more athletic, but Madine, a sophomore, is a better passer. Neither the offensive line nor running backs have much experience, either. Robinson's 163 yards leads all returning runners.

Outlook: This time a year ago, the Rams were coming off a 0-11 season. Now they have realistic aspirations of a winning record. Their four wins last season equaled their victory total of the previous four years combined. They won as many league games (two) as their previous five years in the Patriot League.

Schedule: at Lehigh, Sept. 14; at Villanova, Sept. 21; Columbia, Sept. 28; at Dartmouth, Oct. 5; Lafayette, Oct. 12; at Brown, Oct. 19; Georgetown, Oct. 26; Holy Cross, Nov. 2; Colgate, Nov. 9; at Bucknell, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Rams. **Site:** Bronx, N.Y.

5. HOLY CROSS

Coach: Dan Allen (first year).

1995 record: 2-9. Patriot: 1-4/5th.

Top players: Bobby Andrews, TE; Dominic Blue, DT; Dan Boland, QB; Mike Chapman, OL; Brian Hopkins, WR; Jeff Laboranti, WR; John Myers, WR; Rob Sanchez, RB; David Streeter, LB; Robert Sewell, CB; Chad Vaughn, WR; Mike Zimirowski, G.

Strengths: The Crusaders expect to throw the ball more under new coach Allen, and they have the receivers to catch it. Hopkins (45 catches, 639 yards, five touchdowns) leads a trio of talented junior wide receivers. Vaughn, a senior, showed promise after he switched from quarterback late last season. Andrews hauled in 24 passes. Zimirowski leads a big, strong offensive line. Streeter led the league in tackles (159) last fall.

Weaknesses: The Crusaders must put more pressure on the passer. Given plenty of time to throw, enemy quarterbacks threw for 20 touchdowns and were intercepted only twice last season. Holy Cross was last in the league in total defense and was plagued by missed tackles all year.

Outlook: In Allen's variation of the run-and-shoot, the Crusaders should be more exciting to watch. It remains to be seen if they will have more victories. It all depends on the defense.

Schedule: Massachusetts, Sept. 14; at Colgate, Sept. 21; at Princeton, Sept. 28; Columbia, Oct. 5; Dartmouth, Oct. 12; Harvard, Oct. 19; Bucknell, Oct. 26; at Fordham, Nov. 2; Lehigh, Nov. 9; at Lafayette, Nov. 16; at Georgetown, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1983.

Nickname: Crusaders. **Site:** Worcester, Mass.

6. COLGATE

Coach: Dick Biddle (first year).

1995 record: 0-11. Patriot: 0-5/6th.

Top players: Marcus Cameron, CB; Anthony Caravetta, TB; Matt Domyancic, LB; Jack Durkin, OL; Corey Hill, WR; Derik Liberatore, DT; Mark Lindell, QB; Tom Morelli, P; Joe Osiecki, K/P; Jamal Patterson, CB; Daymon Smith, RB; Adam Sofran, LB; Chris Young, TE.

Strengths: The Red Raiders will be experienced as 18 starters return, but a few have switched positions. Patterson, the team's second-leading rusher, was moved to cornerback. Young, who started seven games at line-backer, is now a tight end. Lindell is a two-year starter at quarterback. Smith led the team in rushing last season after missing the previous year with a knee injury.

Weaknesses: Colgate lacks depth at just about every position, so injuries will be a problem. The Red Raiders scored the fewest points in the league (12.2 per game average), gave up the most (33.4) and lost a league-high 17 fumbles. It's little wonder they posted their first winless season in 105 years of football.

Outlook: One of the first things Biddle did after he was promoted from running backs coach was talk former Colgate coach and athletic director Fred Dunlap out of retirement. With Dunlap, 68, as offensive coordinator, Colgate figures to have a more balanced offense than the run-oriented attack of former coach Ed Sweeney. Colgate should be much more competitive in league games.

Schedule: at Richmond, Sept. 7; Buffalo, Sept. 14; Holy Cross, Sept. 21; at Pennsylvania, Sept. 28; Brown, Oct. 5; at Towson State, Oct. 12; at Cornell, Oct. 19; Lafayette, Oct. 26; at Fordham, Nov. 9; at Lehigh, Nov. 16; at Bucknell, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1983.

Nickname: Red Raiders. **Site:** Hamilton, N.Y.

Text by Bill Doyle.

Keydets RB Haskins has excelled after taking 'road less-traveled'

By ABE HARDESTY

Even in his fourth year at Virginia Military Institute, Thomas Haskins keeps missing opportunities to elude chores.

"At this point, he could slough off of some guard duty or marching in parades just by saying, 'I'm Thomas Haskins,'" VMI coach Bill Stewart says. "But he doesn't try to get out of anything. He does it all. Every day. He's the first guy on the practice field and the last to leave. ... He's a relentless overachiever."

Haskins indeed qualifies as a coach's dream. Already the holder of every major rushing record in school history, Haskins remains so active on the practice field that the usually demanding Stewart frequently orders him to sit out some of the drills. While stars on many campuses try to elude spring drills, Haskins competes in every one—and runs on VMI's indoor and outdoor track teams at the same time. In each of the past two years, he has competed in the conference track championships in the morning and played in a spring scrimmage later in the day.

"He's the damnedest team player I've ever been around," Stewart says. "He's the ultimate team man. ... But, honestly, he's a better person than he is a player."

Despite the limits of his 5-8, 172-pound frame—and VMI's uphill climb in the Southern Conference—Haskins has been a remarkably consistent and durable player since Stewart arrived two years ago and made him the tailback in the Keydets' power-I offense. Haskins rushed for 1,548 yards last season against a schedule deemed eighth-toughest in Division I-AA by the NCAA. That performance pushed his career totals to 3,651 rushing yards and 5,373 all-purpose yards, both the most in the history of the nation's smallest Division I football school.

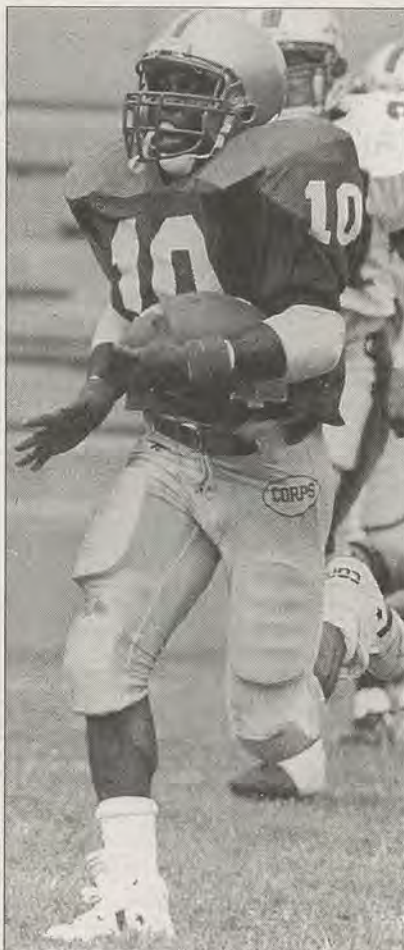
Haskins came to VMI for financial reasons—it was the only "full ride" he received as a 145-pound prospect four years ago out of Fork Union (Va.) Military Academy. Since then, he has become somewhat of a goodwill ambassador for the military life as well as an inspiration for the "little guys" trying to make it in Division I football.

"I was like any other high school guy: I needed lot of maturity, as far as looking down the road," Haskins says. "I'm still trying to grow into that 'man' thing, but I know that the structured life has helped me."

"VMI is a road less-traveled. So far, taking it has paid off for me."

Haskins is majoring in international studies. He hopes to use it—and his ability to speak three languages fluently—to eventually land a job with the CIA. More immediately, he wants to get the Keydets to the top of the Southern Conference standings, a place they haven't been in nearly two decades.

Haskins' ability to run with the football is unquestioned. He ran for a league-high 266



Thomas Haskins makes up for his lack of size by being a "relentless overachiever," says his coach.

yards against UT-Chattanooga last season and for 200 yards in 32 rugged carries against an Appalachian State team that owned the league's best defense. Catching the ball is on the agenda for 1996.

"This year, I hope to show I can catch the ball," Haskins says. "I think Coach Stewart does a great job of utilizing my ability, and we worked a lot in the spring on using me as a receiver."

Haskins, who had some partial-scholarship offers as a prospective wide receiver, should have no trouble adding receiving to his arsenal.

"He has soft hands; you never hear the ball hit his hands," Stewart says. "And we've got a better chance to win if we get him the ball more."

Like his VMI team, whose 4-7 mark included four losses to teams ranked in the I-AA Top 20 last fall, Haskins is an old hand at facing bigger opponents. He started in the backfield at Richmond (Va.) High Springs High at 135 pounds and is still a compact 172.

"I've always been small. What keeps me going is doubters," Haskins says. "The heart is where it's at—it's the only size that matters."

PREDICTIONS

ALL-SOUTHERN TEAM

OFFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
WR	TIM MARTIN, Marshall	5-9/176	Sr.
WR	B.J. ADIGUN, E. Tennessee State	5-9/154	Jr.
TE	JERMAINE WIGGINS, Marshall	6-3/245	Sr.
T	JIMMY BUTLER, Western Carolina	6-5/285	Sr.
T	CHAD GROOVER, Appalachian St.	6-6/298	Sr.
G	SHAWN CLARK, Appalachian St.	6-5/275	Jr.
G	AARON FERGUSON, Marshall	6-3/280	Sr.
C	SCOTT KADLUB, Appalachian St.	6-0/281	Sr.
QB	BRANIFF BONAVENTURE, Furman	6-2/190	Sr.
RB	THOMAS HASKINS, VMI	5-8/172	Sr.
RB	DAMON SCOTT, Appalachian St.	5-10/209	Sr.

DEFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
E	B.J. COHEN, Marshall	6-3/240	Jr.
T	BILLY LYON, Marshall	6-5/290	Sr.
T	DAN BEST, Western Carolina	6-5/268	Soph.
E	JAMES RUSSELL, E. Tennessee St.	6-3/209	Sr.
LB	DEXTER COAKLEY, Appalachian St.	5-11/205	Sr.
LB	JOE DIBERNARDO, Appalachian St.	6-2/229	Sr.
LB	SCOTT BELCHER, The Citadel	6-1/219	Jr.
CB	MELVIN CUNNINGHAM, Marshall	5-10/180	Sr.
CB	DONNELL BRINSON, W. Carolina	5-10/187	Sr.
S	JEREMY OSBORNE, Furman	5-11/190	Jr.
S	ERIC THIGPEN, Georgia Southern	6-0/201	Sr.

SPECIALISTS

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
K	JAY SUTTON, Appalachian St.	5-10/157	Sr.
P	KEN HINSLEY, Western Carolina	6-3/198	Soph.
KR	TIM MARTIN, Marshall	5-9/176	Sr.

PLAYERS OF THE YEAR



OFFENSE:

THOMAS HASKINS
RB, VMI



DEFENSE:

DEXTER COAKLEY
LB, Appalachian St.

Haskins has bench-pressed 225 pounds 13 times. He runs the 40 in 4.43 seconds and the 200 meters in 23 flat. Before he seeks that CIA job, he'd love to work in the NFL.

"It's not something I'm working for now, but it's something all players like to think about trying some day," Haskins says. "If I do go to the combine, I know I have to be eye-opening in the 40 or the weights. When you're small, it's a matter of what extra you have. Coach Stewart put it that way, and I believe it. And I believe with hard work I can get that something extra." ♦

Abe Hardesty covers the Southern Conference for the Greenville (S.C.) News.

SOUTHERN TEAM CHARTS

1. APPALACHIAN STATE

Coach: Jerry Moore (55-29, 7 years; 82-77-2 overall, 14 years).
1995 record: 12-1 (including 1-1 in I-AA playoffs).
Southern: 8-0/1st.

Top players: Jackie Avery, DT; Shawn Clark, G; Dexter Coakley, LB; Joe DiBernardo, LB; Chad Groover, OT; Allen Guinn, P; Gerard Hardy, QB; Scott Kadlub, C; Damon Scott, RB; Jay Sutton, K; Jeff Vollmer, TE.

Strengths: Coakley and DiBernardo form the nucleus of an aggressive defense. The defense gets additional help from Guinn, one of the league's top punters. The offensive line, built around Groover and Kadlub, is experienced, efficient and assertive. ASU led the league in rushing last year and easily could again with all-leaguer Scott.

Weaknesses: A new quarterback must be found. Slippery option man Hardy is most likely to be the one. His running ability would add a dimension to the offense that his predecessor, Scott Satterfield, could not.

Outlook: As Hardy gains experience and Scott continues to improve, ASU will have a potent ball-control offense to go with its rugged defense. That puts another league title and playoff berth within reach.

Schedule: at Wake Forest, Aug. 29; Tennessee Tech, Sept. 7; at Eastern Kentucky, Sept. 14; The Citadel, Sept. 28; at East Tennessee State, Oct. 5; Furman, Oct. 12; at Georgia Southern, Oct. 19; Marshall, Oct. 26; at UT Chattanooga, Nov. 2; at Western Carolina, Nov. 16; VMI, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1995.

Nickname: Mountaineers. **Site:** Boone, N.C.

2. MARSHALL

Coach: Bob Pruett (first year).

1995 record: 12-3 (lost in I-AA final). **Southern:** 7-1/2nd.

Top players: B.J. Cohen, DE; Melvin Cunningham, CB; Jon Duncan, LE; Jerome Embry, LB; Aaron Ferguson, G; Bill Lyon, DT; Tim Martin, WR; Larry McCloud, LB; Chad Pennington, QB; Scott Smythe, SS; Jermaine Wiggins, TE.

Strengths: Ten defensive starters return, the best being Lyon, Cohen and Cunningham. Most of the offensive ring-leaders are back as well, including Ferguson, a three-time all-conference guard.

Weaknesses: There are transition questions as the 53-year-old Pruett, a former Herd player who had been defensive coordinator at Florida the past two years, steps in for Marshall's final year in Division I-AA. His only significant remodeling job is along the offensive line, where three starters must be replaced.

Outlook: With plenty of speed and a wealth of playoff experience, the Herd potentially could play for the I-AA title on its home field for the second consecutive year.

Schedule: Howard, Sept. 7; West Virginia State, Sept. 14; at Georgia Southern, Sept. 21; Western Kentucky, Sept. 28; UT Chattanooga, Oct. 5; at VMI, Oct. 12; Western Carolina, Oct. 19; at Appalachian State, Oct. 26; The Citadel, Nov. 2; at East Tennessee State, Nov. 9; Furman, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1995.

Nickname: Thundering Herd. **Site:** Huntington, W.Va.

3. FURMAN

Coach: Bobby Johnson (9-13, 2 years).

1995 record: 6-5. **Southern:** 5-3/T3rd.

Top players: Braniff Bonaventure, QB; Luther Broughton, TE; Josh Cole, WR; Mark Moore, TB; Jeremy Osborne, FS; Orlando Ruff, LB; Bernard Scott, OLB; Jay Thier, LB.

Strengths: A balanced offense, anchored by Bonaventure and Broughton. Moore rushed for 937 yards last season and should be better as a junior. A defense that had 10 new starters a year ago has all 11 starters back this year.

Weaknesses: Furman's overall team speed isn't on par with Marshall and Appalachian State, and that limits a defense that had only 18 takeaways and 11 sacks in '95. The kicking game could be a problem.

Outlook: After going 3-8 and 6-5 the past two years, Johnson clearly has Furman on the rise. A repeat of last year's surprising third-place league finish is within reach, and a playoff opportunity is an outside possibility, especially if the Paladins can survive opening games against Clemson and South Carolina State without significant injuries.

Schedule: at Clemson, Sept. 7; South Carolina State, Sept. 14; Wofford, Sept. 21; at VMI, Sept. 28; Western Carolina, Oct. 5; at Appalachian State, Oct. 12; The Citadel, Oct. 19; at East Tennessee State, Oct. 26; Georgia Southern, Nov. 9; at Marshall, Nov. 16; UT Chattanooga, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1990.

Nickname: Paladins. **Site:** Greenville, S.C.

4. GEORGIA SOUTHERN

Coach: Frank Ellwood (first year).

1995 record: 9-4 (including 1-1 in playoffs). **Southern:** 5-3/T3rd.

Top players: Lee Brooks, DT; Reggie Garland, TE; Jamie Glover, G; Robert Moore, C; Chad Nighbert, OLB; Derrick Reeves, DE; Kenny Robinson, QB; Larry Rogers, LB; Roderick Russell, FB; Damien Tanner, OLB; Eric Thigpen, FS; Edward Thomas, DE.

Strengths: Seven starters return on a defense that forced a league-high 36 turnovers. Thomas and Reeves might be the best pass-rush tandem in the conference, and Brooks, Thigpen and Rogers are solid defenders. The right side of the offensive line returns intact. The kicking game is good.

Weaknesses: Robinson, an option specialist who is explosive when healthy, was injury-plagued a year ago. The Eagles also have to find replacements for leading rusher Charles Bostick and star WR/KR Dexter Dawson. The passing game produced only 94 yards a game last year.

Outlook: Although the Eagles beat Troy State in the I-AA playoffs and eight other opponents, the prevailing sentiment around Statesboro was that the '95 team underachieved. It cost Tim Stowers his job despite a 51-23 record in six years as coach. Ellwood was appointed as the team's interim coach on March 31, but the enjoyment level reached in '96 will hinge on him finding some offense.

Schedule: at South Carolina State, Aug. 31; at Florida, Sept. 7; Marshall, Sept. 21; at UT Chattanooga, Sept. 28; VMI, Oct. 5; at Western Carolina, Oct. 12; Appalachian State, Oct. 19; at The Citadel, Oct. 26; East Tennessee State, Nov. 2; at Furman, Nov. 9; Liberty, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1995.

Nickname: Eagles. **Site:** Statesboro, Ga.

5. EAST TENNESSEE STATE

Coach: Mike Cavan (20-24, 4 years; 57-46-2 overall, 10 years).

1995 record: 4-7. **Southern:** 4-4/5th.

Top players: B.J. Adigun, WR; Justin Calhoun, C; Curtis Eason, DT; Brian Edwards, TB; Mario Hankerson, LB; Greg Johnson, WR; James Russell, DE; Greg Ryan, QB; Mike Scott, FS.

Strengths: Ryan is the top passer in school history, and he could improve simply by getting the ball to Adigun and Johnson more often. The defense is anchored by Hankerson and Russell, one of the league's best pass rushers.

Weaknesses: Last year, the Bucs had trouble running the football (eight touchdowns) and stopping the run (26 allowed).

Outlook: An ambitious '95 schedule punished the Buccaneers physically and emotionally, setting back a rebuilding project that had looked promising. With a better start and a better running attack, the Bucs could top .500.

Schedule: Liberty, Aug. 29; at East Carolina, Sept. 7; West Virginia State, Sept. 14; VMI, Sept. 21; at Western Carolina, Sept. 28; Appalachian State, Oct. 5; at The Citadel, Oct. 12; Furman, Oct. 28; at Georgia Southern, Nov. 2; Marshall, Nov. 9; at UT Chattanooga, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Buccaneers. **Site:** Johnson City, Tenn.

6. VMI

Coach: Bill Stewart (5-17, 2 years).

1995 record: 4-7. **Southern:** 3-5/6th.

Top players: Keith Braxton, DT; Matt Coley, DE; Kelly Cook, LB; Brian Gliba, OG; Marcus Griffin, FL; Greg Harris, TE; Thomas Haskins, TB; Al Lester, QB; Mike Rogers, LB; Jack Smith, C; Billy Thomas, DT.

Strengths: Haskins and Lester lead a veteran offense that ranked as the school's best in '95. Cook and three-year starting linemen Braxton and Thomas are among 19 lettermen returning on defense.

Weaknesses: A lack of team speed always is a problem, one reason the defense was the league's most porous last year.

Outlook: Haskins' big-play ability and the return of 15 other starters fuel hopes of a .500 season in the face of a demanding schedule. Even if the Keydets don't post the school's first winning record in 15 years, this should be VMI's most competitive team in a long time.

Schedule: Mississippi (at Jackson, Miss), Sept. 7; at William & Mary, Sept. 14; at East Tennessee State, Sept. 21; Furman, Sept. 28; at Georgia Southern, Oct. 5; Marshall, Oct. 12; at UT Chattanooga, Oct. 19; Western Carolina, Nov. 2; Richmond, Nov. 9; The Citadel, Nov. 16; at Appalachian State, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Keydets. **Site:** Lexington, Va.

7. WESTERN CAROLINA

Coach: Steve Hodgins (27-38, 6 years).

1995 record: 3-7. **Southern:** 2-6/T7th.

Top players: Dan Best, DT; Donnell Brinson, CB; Jimmy Butler, OT; Elton Clawson, LB; Robb Harris, FS; Ken Hinsley, K/P; Kawasak Penn, TE; Ben Richardson, LB;

Brian Roseboro, NG; Alex Sprinkle, C; Terene Stokes, TB. **Strengths:** Brinson and Harris are the leaders of a quick, experienced secondary, and the line and linebacking look solid. As a freshman last year, Hinsley ranked among the league's best in both punting and kick-scoring.

Weaknesses: Even with a veteran offensive line, the Catamounts were unable to run last year and were the league's worst at converting third downs. The line is questionable again, and the receivers don't have much experience.

Outlook: After winning 15 league games in the previous three seasons, Hodgins endured his first disappointing season in Cullowhee last year, when a senior-laden team lost six of its last seven games. Breaking in a new quarterback and rebuilding the offensive line could take more than one season.

Schedule: at Liberty, Sept. 7; Wofford, Sept. 14; at The Citadel, Sept. 21; East Tennessee State, Sept. 28; at Furman, Oct. 6; Georgia Southern, Oct. 12; at Marshall, Oct. 19; UT Chattanooga, Oct. 26; at VMI, Nov. 2; Elon, Nov. 9; Appalachian State, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1983.

Nickname: Catamounts. **Site:** Cullowhee, N.C.

8. UT CHATTANOOGA

Coach: Buddy Green (7-15, 2 years).

1995 record: 4-7. **Southern:** 2-6/T7th.

Top players: Keith Blanks, DT; Tyrone Coleman, TB; Frahn D'Anjou, TB; Ron Fague, FS; Jeff Gadd, OL; Ricco Hall, LB; Von Hill, WR; Brian Hampton, QB; Dee Parker, TE; Jeff Peters, QB.

Strengths: Peters led the league in passing efficiency last year. The most help he may receive in 1996 could come from the defense, where seven starters return.

Weaknesses: The skill-position players surrounding Peters lack experience. The Moccasins, somehow, have to replace two receivers who combined for 87 receptions and their team-leading rusher.

Outlook: The Moccasins were surprisingly efficient with the ball last year, scoring at least two touchdowns against every foe except Auburn and ranking fourth in the league in total offense. Similar production, along with a more seasoned defense, is needed this year.

Schedule: at Colorado State, Aug. 31; at Middle Tennessee, Sept. 14; Mississippi Valley, Sept. 21; Georgia Southern, Sept. 28; at Marshall, Oct. 5; VMI, Oct. 19; at Western Carolina, Oct. 26; Appalachian State, Nov. 2; at The Citadel, Nov. 9; East Tennessee State, Nov. 16; at Furman, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1984.

Nickname: Moccasins. **Site:** Chattanooga, Tenn.

9. THE CITADEL

Coach: Charlie Taaffe (55-47-1, 9 years).

1995 record: 2-9. **Southern:** 0-8/9th.

Top players: Scott Belcher, LB; Derek Beres, G; Kenny Fillmore, SE; Derek Green, WR; Anquan Gist, SS; Corey Harris, CB; Garrick Haltiwanger, RB; Lorenzo Jackson, LB; Shawn Lyons, C; Stanley Myers, QB.

Strengths: A defense that was competitive last year returns largely intact. Belcher and Gist are dependable. Myers should emerge as a productive option quarterback after running for 859 yards as a freshman. Haltiwanger, a top baseball prospect, is a dependable runner with receiving ability.

Weaknesses: The wishbone sputtered a lot last year, making the lack of a passing game all the more apparent. The punting game was the league's worst, and a lack of quickness on defense made sacks rare.

Outlook: The wishbone snapped in '95, leaving the school with its losingest season ever. The disappointment came only three seasons after Taaffe's troops won 11 games and only one season after The Citadel set I-AA rushing records. That breeds hope for a turnaround, but it's unlikely to be immediate.

Schedule: at Miami (Fla.), Sept. 7; Richmond, Sept. 14; Western Carolina, Sept. 21; at Appalachian State, Sept. 28; East Tennessee State, Oct. 12; at Furman, Oct. 19; Georgia Southern, Oct. 26; at Marshall, Nov. 2; UT Chattanooga, Nov. 9; at VMI, Nov. 16; Wofford, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1992.

Nickname: Bulldogs. **Site:** Charleston, S.C.

Text by Abe Hardesty.

McNeese's 'difference-maker' ready to again lead by example

By CARL DUBOIS

Starting over doesn't have to be painful. Indeed, as McNeese State's Zack Bronson has demonstrated, you can even inflict a little hurt of your own.

Bronson, a senior free safety, is one of only three defensive starters returning from the Cowboys' 1995 team, whose 13-1 record was the best in school history. But as Bronson proved three years ago, numbers don't tell the whole story.

When the Cowboys opened their 1993 season, Bronson was one of six new starters on defense, and coaches and teammates wanted to see how a redshirt freshman would perform as a key operative in McNeese State's 4-2-5 defense. Northern Iowa was wondering, too.

It didn't take long for the Panthers to discover that picking on Bronson was, in fact, a death wish. With six minutes left in the first half, Bronson intercepted a Northern Iowa pass and returned it 48 yards for a touchdown. Just before the half ended, Bronson picked off another pass, this one in McNeese territory, and the Cowboys went on to win comfortably.

"It didn't take long to see that Zack was something special," McNeese State coach Bobby Keasler says. "He's an impact player. He's what we call a difference-maker."

Bronson's debut was no fluke. In his second game, he intercepted two more passes. He finished the season with nine interceptions and helped the Cowboys lead Division I-AA in total defense. As a result, Bronson was named the Southland Conference's Freshman of the Year and captured all-league honors.

Since then, offenses no longer test Bronson. Nor do they have much success against the Cowboys overall. McNeese State was No. 1 nationally in scoring defense last season, and finished first against the rush and 10th against the pass.

"When coaches break down our game film, they find out where Zack is," Keasler says. "And when their quarterbacks come up to the line of scrimmage, they find out where Zack is."

So informed, the opposition treads carefully. Accordingly, Bronson needed two more seasons to match his freshman total of nine interceptions, but he has made a difference in other areas. In the second game of the 1994 season, he scored on an 84-yard punt return. Thereafter, opponents have had to devise strategy for Bronson the kick returner.

"So many times, Zack has made a big play for us that turns a game," Keasler says. "It might not be an interception; it might be a knockdown, a blocked field goal, a tackle to save a touchdown. He's always around the football. Always."

Last season, Bronson had five interceptions, and his teammates collected 18 more. "Zack's one of those players who makes the people around him better," secondary coach Tommy Tate says.



McNEESE STATE UNIVERSITY

Despite opponents throwing away from him, Zack Bronson came up with five interceptions.

With eight new starters on defense, the Cowboys will need Bronson to lead by example again.

"Zack's come full circle," Tate says. "When he was a freshman, he had two seniors at strong safety helping him, but because our free safety sets our coverages, he still had to be a leader. The next year, we started from scratch at strong safety, and Zack had to be the leader again in the secondary. This year, we've got two new cornerbacks and Zack's the veteran."

Bronson's career at Jasper (Texas) High School showed McNeese State coaches all the signs of a champion. He was an all-state safety and all-district wide receiver. He scored 41 points in a basketball game and ran on a state-champion mile-relay team. Now, Bronson is in a position to become the fourth player in Southland history to be chosen first-team all-league four times. He also is a good bet to make the grade in the NFL.

"He's got the size (6-1, 200 pounds), the speed and tools," Tate says. "He's one of the hardest hitters we've ever had here. Zack's got a bright future ahead of him."

But after McNeese State reached the I-AA quarterfinals when he was a freshman and sophomore, then was upset at home by Marshall in the semifinals last season,

PREDICTIONS

ALL-SOUTHLAND TEAM

OFFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
WR	CHRIS JEFFERSON, S.F. Austin	6-0/205	Sr.
WR	PATRICK PALMER, NW Louisiana	6-1/171	Jr.
TE	CHRIS FONTENOT, McNeese St.	6-3/228	Jr.
T	KERRY JENKINS, Troy State	6-6/275	Sr.
T	REGGIE NELSON, McNeese State	6-3/300	Soph.
G	GREG REYNOLDS, Nicholls State	6-2/273	Sr.
G	JODY FERGUSON, NW Louisiana	6-1/307	Sr.
C	STEVEN delaTORRE, SW Texas	6-2/255	Jr.
QB	DAVID WILLIAMS, SW Texas	6-2/215	Jr.
RB	CLAUDE MATHIS, SW Texas	5-9/180	Jr.
RB	ARRID GREGORY, Troy State	5-10/185	Sr.

DEFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
E	STACY MURRY, Troy State	6-3/270	Jr.
T	CLINT ZANDER, S.F. Austin	6-5/280	Jr.
T	AARON delaTORRE, S.F. Austin	6-2/288	Jr.
E	PRATT LYONS, Troy State	6-4/280	Sr.
LB	CARL QUILLER, McNeese State	6-0/225	Sr.
LB	CHARLES AYRO, McNeese State	6-2/230	Soph.
LB	JEREMIAH TROTTER, S.F. Austin	6-3/220	Soph.
CB	NICOLAS JACK, SW Texas	6-0/190	Sr.
CB	KEITH THIBODEAUX, NW Louisiana	6-0/175	Sr.
S	ZACK BRONSON, McNeese State	6-1/200	Sr.
S	DAMIYON BELL, S.F. Austin	5-11/178	Sr.

SPECIALISTS

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
K	SHONZ LAFRENZ, McNeese State	5-10/170	Fr.
P	RYAN KLAUS, Sam Houston State	6-3/175	Soph.
KR	CLAUDE MATHIS, SW Texas	5-9/180	Jr.

PLAYERS OF THE YEAR



OFFENSE:

CLAUDE MATHIS
RB, SW Texas



DEFENSE:

PRATT LYONS
E, Troy State

Bronson is taking first things first. And uppermost in his mind is another run at a national championship.

"We're going to be a quicker team, a more explosive team," Bronson says. "We have a chance to take it to the next level. It's going to be exciting."

Especially if Bronson continues to be a player who brings out the best in everyone around him. In other words, a difference-maker.

Carl Dubois covers the Southland Conference and I-AA football for the Lake Charles (La.) American Press.

SOUTHLAND TEAM CHARTS

1. MCNEESE STATE

Coach: Bobby Keasler (53-21-2, 6 years).

1995 record: 13-1 (lost in I-AA semifinals). Southland: 5-0/1st.

Top players: Charles Ayro, LB; Derrick Beavers, TB; Zack Bronson, S; Marcus Daniels, S; William Davis, WR; Chris Fontenot, TE; Antoinel Goza, DE; Shonz LaFrenz, K; Marcus LeBlanc, S; Tim Leger, QB; Damien Morris, WR; Carl Quiller, LB; Reggie Nelson, OT.

Strengths: Tradition, attitude, special teams and defense. McNeese has led Division I-AA in total defense two of the past three years, and the '96 unit, led by Bronson, is perhaps its most athletic ever. Bronson is one of the best safeties in the nation, regardless of classification.

Weaknesses: Fourteen starters were lost, including the school's all-time leading passer (Kerry Joseph), rusher (Henry Fields) and receiver (Terence Davis). Depth on both lines is suspect. Leger is a 22-year-old sophomore who'll be starting for the first time. He spent three seasons playing minor league baseball before enrolling at McNeese last year. Beavers, a transfer from LSU, will get first crack at replacing Fields.

Outlook: McNeese won't duplicate its 1995 success, when it reached the semifinals of the I-AA playoffs for the first time, but the Cowboys won't fall as far as many expect, either. Keasler would rather empty his bench than win by 50 points. That strategy will pay off, especially in what for most schools would be a painful rebuilding year.

Schedule: Southwest Missouri State, Sept. 7; James Madison, Sept. 14; Angelo State, Sept. 21; at Northern Iowa, Sept. 28; Arkansas-Monticello, Oct. 5; at Troy State, Oct. 12; at Sam Houston State, Oct. 26; Stephen F. Austin, Nov. 2; Southwest Texas State, Nov. 9; at Northwestern State, Nov. 16; Nicholls State, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1995.

Nickname: Cowboys. **Site:** Lake Charles, La.

2. TROY STATE

Coach: Larry Blakeney (46-13-1, 5 years).

1995 record: 11-1 as a I-AA independent (lost in first round of playoffs). Southland: 1st year in league.

Top players: Kenny Alvis, DB; Gerald DeBardeleben, LB; Arid Gregory, RB/KR; Joe Jackson, FB; Kerry Jenkins, OT; Pratt Lyons, DE; Stacy Murry, DE; Cliff Shamburger, DB/KR; Demetric Shipman, DB; Willie Smith, LB.

Strengths: Murry and Lyons lead a crew of six returning starters on defense. Lyons may be the best defensive end in I-AA. Gregory is one of I-AA's best kick returners. Blakeney's knack for landing key transfers from Auburn, his former employer, pays dividends every year. Alvis is a former starter at Auburn.

Weaknesses: Three starters on the offensive line, including All-American tackle Bob Hall, are gone. The starting quarterback (Jeremy Rowell) and his top two wide receivers also will be tough to replace. Look for Stan Davis to get the first shot at replacing Rowell.

Outlook: Troy officials rarely talk in the spring and summer about their I-A transfers, but you can be sure by the start of the season that the Trojans will have impact newcomers at key positions. Reportedly, former Florida State offensive lineman Anthony Phillips, a prep All-American, will suit up for Troy this season. The winner of the October 12 showdown against McNeese State (in Troy) will win the conference.

Schedule: at Eastern Kentucky, Sept. 7; Nicholls State, Sept. 21; at Stephen F. Austin, Sept. 28; at Alabama State, Oct. 5; McNeese State, Oct. 12; Southwest Texas State, Oct. 19; at Jacksonville State, Oct. 26; at Northwestern State, Nov. 9; at Sam Houston State, Nov. 16; Samford, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1995.

Nickname: Trojans. **Site:** Troy, Ala.

3. STEPHEN F. AUSTIN

Coach: John Pearce (28-17-2, 4 years).

1995 record: 11-2 (lost in second round of playoffs).

Southland: 4-1/2nd.

Top players: Damijon Bell, SS; Kerry Bennett, FB; Aaron DeLaTorre, DT; Curtis James, DE; Chris Jefferson, WR; Michael Pearce, WR; Mike Quinn, QB; Jason Speights,

CB; Jeremiah Trotter, LB; Dameian Vallery, RB; Craig

Warren, OL; Clint Zander, DT.

Strengths: One of the nation's best defenses in 1995 has 10 starters back. Bell and Trotter—a big-play artist as a true freshman last year—throw the knockout punches. Jefferson is a steady receiver.

Weaknesses: Six starters are gone from an explosive offense, including three linemen on what was the team's foundation for success the past two years. A new kicker must be found, but freshman Brandon Nersesian has solid credentials.

Outlook: If the replacements for the school's best quarterback (James Ritchey) and running back (Leonard Harris) of the '90s get time to develop, the defense may be good enough to keep the Lumberjacks in contention for the league title. The schedule is kind, with seven home games. If Pearce can pick up his first win at McNeese State, this might be SFA's year.

Schedule: Eastern New Mexico, Aug. 29; Delta State, Sept. 7; at Northern Iowa, Sept. 14; Troy State, Sept. 28; Sam Houston, Oct. 12; at Nicholls State, Oct. 19; Samford, Oct. 26; at McNeese State, Nov. 2; Jacksonville State, Nov. 9; at Southwest Texas State, Nov. 16; Northwestern State, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1995.

Nickname: Lumberjacks. **Site:** Nacogdoches, Texas.

4. SW TEXAS STATE

Coach: Jim Bob Helduser (15-28-1, 4 years).

1995 record: 4-7. Southland: 2-3/T3rd.

Top players: Aaron Allen, WR/RB; Clifton Black, LB; Steven DeLaTorre, C; Terrance Hutton, WR; Nicolas Jack; CB; Claude Mathis, RB/KR; Adam Means, G; Ypres Thomas, LB; Robert Walker, SS; David Williams, QB; Stace Williams, DT.

Strengths: The Bobcats have 18 starters back, nine on each side of the ball. Mathis will be among I-AA leaders in all-purpose running; he also caught 33 passes last season. David Williams is the Southland's most experienced quarterback; he threw for 2,389 yards and 18 touchdowns as a sophomore last season. All four starters return in the secondary, led by Jack (84 tackles last season) and Walker (65, including 16 against McNeese State).

Weaknesses: Southwest Texas must improve its rushing defense, turnover margin and defensive pursuit to have a breakthrough season. The running game also needs a boost.

Outlook: Helduser, who has weathered four trying seasons in San Marcos, will be rewarded with his first winning season this year. The Bobcats play the Southland's top two teams on the road, but by next season they'll be a contender for the league title.

Schedule: Grand Valley State, Aug. 31; Hofstra, Sept. 14; at Eastern Washington, Sept. 21; Idaho, Sept. 28; at Southern Utah, Oct. 12; at Troy State, Oct. 19; Nicholls State, Oct. 26; at McNeese State, Nov. 9; Stephen F. Austin, Nov. 16; at Sam Houston State, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Bobcats. **Site:** San Marcos, Texas.

5. SAM HOUSTON STATE

Coach: Ron Randleman (79-63-3, 14 years; 166-155-2 overall, 27 years).

1995 record: 5-5. Southland: 2-3/T3rd.

Top players: Cedric Bryant, SS; Wayne Coleman, RB; Mike Fryer, DE; Marcus Hajdik, K; Chris Hall, SS; Ryan Klaus, P; Dedrick Manigo, LB; Calvin Robinson, CB; Chad Schramek, QB; Bennie Wylie, FB.

Strengths: The special teams are solid with the return of all-leaguers Klaus and Hajdik. The Bearcats return 34 underclassmen who lettered last year, and an influx of junior college talent will help, especially on the defensive line.

Weaknesses: There are trouble spots and depth problems on both lines. And the quarterback position continues to be a glaring weakness. Schramek, a junior, completed just 49.4 percent of his passes last season, throwing nine interceptions and only three touchdown passes.

Outlook: Road games against two I-A teams in the first month won't help Bearcats' confidence, but the flipside is that the league's top two teams must come to Huntsville. Randleman has plenty of young talent, but it's still at least

a year away.

Schedule: at Houston, Aug. 31; at Texas A&M-Kingsville, Sept. 14; at Northeast Louisiana, Sept. 21; Texas Southern, Sept. 28; at Stephen F. Austin, Oct. 12; at Northwestern State, Oct. 19; McNeese State, Oct. 26; at Nicholls State, Nov. 9; Troy State, Nov. 16; Southwest Texas State, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1991.

Nickname: Bearcats. **Site:** Huntsville, Texas.

6. NORTHWESTERN STATE

Coach: Sam Goodwin (73-69-3, 13 years; 82-80-4 overall, 15 years).

1995 record: 6-5. Southland: 2-3/T3rd.

Top players: Stuart Archer, C; Joe Brown, DT; Grant Crowder, LB; Jody Ferguson, OL; Roymon Malcolm, TB; Patrick Palmer, WR; Adam Swales, WR; Keith Thibodeaux, CB; LaDann Thomas, LB; Anthony Williams, TB.

Strengths: Not many were evident last season, although the Demons have a talented group of running backs and four starters return on the offensive line. Palmer averaged a hefty 22.5 yards on his 26 catches last season.

Weaknesses: A replacement must be found for quarterback Brad Laird, a four-year starter and the school's all-time leading passer. The defense must replace the front seven and two defensive backs. And as long as the Demons play their home games on artificial turf, there will continue to be injuries. Malcolm, who transferred from Auburn before last season, likely will get first crack at replacing tailback Clarence Matthews, who set 10 school records in '95. Palmer is the return man.

Outlook: It would be much better had Matthews not declared for the NFL draft and instead returned for his senior year. The schedule, which features two I-A opponents but home games against the league's top two teams, is a killer.

Schedule: Southern, Sept. 7; East Texas State, Sept. 21; at Boise State, Sept. 28; at Northeast Louisiana, Oct. 5; at Nicholls State, Oct. 12; Sam Houston State, Oct. 19; at Youngstown State, Oct. 26; at Southwest Texas State, Nov. 2; Troy State, Nov. 9; McNeese State, Nov. 16; at Stephen F. Austin, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1988.

Nickname: Demons. **Site:** Natchitoches, La.

7. NICHOLLS STATE

Coach: Darren Barbier (0-11, 1 year).

1995 record: 0-11. Southland: 0-5/6th.

Top players: Adam Diel, K; Murphy Edwards, DE; John Emery, DL; Nakia Lumar, RB; Greg Reynolds, OL; Reggie Rogers, RB; Kip Rohner, WR; Terrence Spears, FB; Corey Thomas, WR; Ivan Williams, DE; Frank Wilson, RB.

Strengths: They're hard to find, if they exist. Moving Wilson back to running back after a year in the secondary will help the running game (he was the team's second-leading rusher as a sophomore), and Diel is entering his fourth year as the kicker.

Weaknesses: Too many to list. The talent level at Nicholls simply is too far below the rest of the conference for the Colonels to have even a chance in many games this year. Emery, a transfer from Tennessee, is expected to provide immediate help. Iowa State transfer Corey Lambert will battle sophomore Brad Zeller, who started the final four games last season, for the starting quarterback job.

Outlook: Barbier, who won 84 percent of his high school games in Louisiana, had a rude welcome to college football last season, when Nicholls State played arguably the toughest schedule in Division I-AA. The young players who suffered with him, though, kept playing hard, a good sign for the future.

Schedule: at Northeast Louisiana, Aug. 29; Jacksonville State, Sept. 14; at Troy State, Sept. 21; at Samford, Oct. 5; Northwestern State, Oct. 12; Stephen F. Austin, Oct. 19; at Southwest Texas State, Oct. 26; Southern, Nov. 2; Sam Houston State, Nov. 9; Harding, Nov. 16; at McNeese State, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1986.

Nickname: Colonels. **Site:** Thibodaux, La.

Text by Carl Dubois.

Williams has (re)written the book in only two seasons at Southern

By

SCOTT GREMILLION

In just two seasons, tailback Melvin Williams has rewritten part of Southern University's record book. What's left of it, that is.

Strangely, Williams' accomplishments may never be fully recognized because many statistical records are missing from the Jaguars' proud pre-1960 football history. How those game summaries, rosters and statistics disappeared is as big a mystery to school authorities as Williams' running skill is to opposing defenses. One story blames a former school employee for walking off with the records; another indicates a flood was the culprit.

"That doesn't bother me," Williams says with a laugh, "but it's kind of funny. Just give me all of the records. I thought I had all of them anyway."

One thing is certain: Williams, a 5-10, 195-pound junior from Belle Rose, La., has become Southern's first back-to-back 1,000-yard rusher in modern (read: post-1960) history. After running for 1,031 yards in 1994, he gained 1,086 last season as the Jaguars won 11 of 12 games and captured the black colleges' national championship with a Heritage Bowl victory.

Williams needs 1,708 yards over the next two seasons—hardly a daunting task for a player of his caliber—to surpass Jackson State's Lewis Tillman as the Southwestern Athletic Conference's No. 1 career rusher. According to official NCAA statistics (Jackson State's figures don't jibe with the NCAA's), Tillman amassed 3,824 yards on the ground from 1984-88; Williams' total is 2,117.

With much of Southern's record book lost and no Jaguars among the SWAC's career top 10 rushers, Williams will be acknowledged as the Jags' career rushing leader once he supplants the league's No. 10 man, Texas Southern's Nate Johnson. Playing from 1982-86, Johnson motored for 2,699 yards.

"He'll shatter all the records before he leaves," Southern offensive coordinator Mark Orlando says of Williams, who last year led the SWAC in rushing and all-purpose yardage, placed second in scoring and finished third in receiving. Williams also became the first sophomore to win the SWAC's Offensive Player of the Year honor since Alcorn State quarterback Steve McNair in 1992.



JOHN H. WILLIAMS / BATON ROUGE (LA) MORNING-ADVOCATE

Williams needs 1,708 yards over the next two seasons to surpass Jackson State's Lewis Tillman as the SWAC's No. 1 career rusher.

"By far, that's the most important award I've ever won," Williams says. "One of my long-term goals was to become offensive player of the year. It was a surprise that I got it as early as I did. I never thought I'd get it as a sophomore. That's made me proud."

"The most important thing for me is to ... keep my composure and continue to work hard. I can lose everything I've achieved as quickly as I earned it. I have to continue to work hard and do the things I'm supposed to."

Williams, who averaged 4.5 yards per attempt in 1995, could face his biggest challenge this season from his teammates. Southern returns three other solid tailbacks from last year's team—Jermaine Sharp, Leonce Griffin and Lionel Nicholas—all of whom averaged more than 5 yards per carry while playing sporadically. Sharp, in particular, is no slouch; he was LSU's leading rusher in 1994 before transferring across town in Baton Rouge.

In addition, highly regarded sophomore Steve Wofford becomes eligible after being an academic casualty last season. Wofford originally signed with the University of California after putting up staggering numbers in that state's high school ranks.

"I think about them all the time," Williams says of his teammates/rivals. "I know all of those guys have a lot of talent. The main thing I have to do is focus on myself and not focus on those guys. If I was

PREDICTIONS

ALL-SWAC TEAM

OFFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
WR	KILEY BROWN, Texas Southern	6-1/205	Sr.
WR	KOBIE JENKINS, Alcorn State	6-3/206	Sr.
TE	SOLOMON THOMPSON, Grambling	6-3/225	Sr.
T	RAYFIELD ADAMS, Jackson St.	6-3/330	Sr.
T	KEWON ROBINSON, Alcorn St.	6-3/274	Sr.
G	JERRY MYERS, Grambling	6-6/310	Jr.
G	CLIFFORD THOMAS, Texas South.	6-0/285	Sr.
C	UZOMA MOORE, Grambling	6-0/270	Sr.
QB	GRAILYN PRATT, Jackson St.	6-0/190	Jr.
RB	CARLOS KNIGHT, Jackson St.	5-11/221	Jr.
RB	MELVIN WILLIAMS, Southern	5-10/195	Jr.

DEFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
E	CARLOS LOCKHART, Jackson St.	6-2/245	Sr.
T	ROBERT WALKER, Southern	6-2/302	Sr.
T	MIKE SAMSON, Grambling	6-4/315	Sr.
E	CARLOS THORNTON, Alcorn St.	6-3/275	Sr.
LB	RICHARD ALVARADO, Jackson St.	6-5/251	Sr.
LB	MARCUS WADE, Miss. Valley	6-0/205	Sr.
LB	FRED HARPER, Alcorn State	6-1/195	Sr.
CB	QUINCY COLEMAN, Jackson St.	5-10/170	Jr.
CB	DERRICK LEWIS, Jackson St.	5-11/183	Jr.
S	RICKY ARVIE, Southern	6-0/190	Jr.
S	SEAN WOODSON, Jackson St.	6-2/210	Sr.

SPECIALISTS

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
K	CARLOS LEACH, Southern	5-10/180	Sr.
P	LIONEL NICHOLAS, Southern	6-2/206	Jr.
KR	JERMAINE SHARP, Southern	5-11/198	Sr.

PLAYERS OF THE YEAR



OFFENSE:

MELVIN WILLIAMS
RB, Southern



DEFENSE:

SEAN WOODSON
S, Jackson State

in their position, I would want to start, too. I consider myself a team player. I welcome the challenge.

"Ever since I came here, people doubted me. They wondered if I could play college football because I came from a small high school (enrollment of about 250). Even though I've accomplished a lot of things, people still doubt me. That motivates me. That keeps me going. I've had a lot to prove."

And that doesn't even include finding his rightful place in Southern's not-quite-all-together record book. ♦

Scott Gremillion covers Southern and the SWAC for the Baton Rouge (La.) Advocate.

SWAC TEAM CHARTS

1. SOUTHERN

Coach: Pete Richardson (28-7, 3 years; 69-21-1 overall, 8 years).

1995 record: 11-1 (beat Florida A&M in Heritage Bowl). SWAC: 6-1/2nd.

Top players: Ricky Arvie, SS; Sam George, QB; Lawrence Hart, TE; Carlos Leach, K; Danny Morris, OL; Lionel Nicholas, P; Jermaine Sharpe, TB/KR; Peter Sheppard, WR; Robert Walker, DT; Joe Williams, DE; John Williams, CB; Melvin Williams, RB; Miguel Variste, OL.

Strengths: Southern boasts enough depth at running back for two teams, thanks to Melvin Williams and Sharpe, who doubles as an elusive return man. Sharpe is a former starter at LSU. The Jaguars also add former California prep star Steve Wofford, a tailback who signed with the University of California out of high school but did not meet academic requirements last year. The secondary should be solid with John Williams and Arvie.

Weaknesses: The Jaguars must replace 13 starters, including the quarterback, three wide receivers, three offensive linemen, one defensive linemen, three linebackers and two defensive backs.

Outlook: Southern has lost just seven games in three seasons under Richardson, including six by nine points or less. Look for the Jaguars' success to continue in 1996.

Schedule: at Northwestern State, Sept. 7; Alabama State, Sept. 14; at Prairie View A&M, Sept. 21; Tennessee State (at Atlanta), Sept. 28; Mississippi Valley State, Oct. 5; Jackson State, Oct. 19; at Alcorn State, Oct. 26; at Nicholls State, Nov. 2; Florida A&M, Nov. 9; Texas Southern, Nov. 16; Grambling State (at New Orleans), Nov. 30.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Jaguars. **Site:** Baton Rouge, La.

2. JACKSON STATE

Coach: James Carson (28-16-1, 5 years).

1995 record: 9-3 (lost in first round of playoffs). SWAC: 7-0/1st.

Top players: Rayfield Adams, OT; Richard Alvarado, LB; Quincy Coleman, CB; Cedric Dunbar, P; Otha Evans, LB; Carlos Knight, RB; Derrick Lewis, CB; Carlos Lockhart, DE; Grailyn Pratt, QB; Sean Woodson, SS; Jerome Young, WR.

Strengths: The secondary—featuring the hard-hitting Woodson—is among the best in I-AA. Jackson State's offense should be able to run and shoot with the return of Pratt, Knight and Adams. Dunbar is a deluxe punter.

Weaknesses: Depth on defense may be a problem because of the loss of linemen Doug Barnes and Corwin Sledge and all-everything free safety Picasso Nelson.

Outlook: Jackson State's glory days could continue. The Tigers won the SWAC championship last season, their first since 1990, which ended the school's longest title drought since 1976-79.

Schedule: Alabama State (at Birmingham, Ala.), Sept. 1; Tennessee State (at Memphis), Sept. 14; Florida A&M, Sept. 21; Mississippi Valley State, Sept. 28; Texas Southern, Oct. 5; Central State, Oct. 12; at Southern, Oct. 19; at Grambling State, Oct. 26; Arkansas-Pine Bluff (at Little Rock, Ark.), Nov. 2; Prairie View A&M, Nov. 16; Alcorn State, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1995.

Nickname: Tigers. **Site:** Jackson, Miss.

3. ALCORN STATE

Coach: Cardell Jones (35-19-2, 4 years).

1995 record: 4-6-1. SWAC: 3-3-1/5th.

Top players: Fred Harper, LB; Kobie Jenkins, WR; Malcolm Jones, DB; Nario Owens, LB; Kewon Robinson, OT; Bertrelle Shelby, FB; Marcus Taylor, QB; Carlos Thornton, DE; Goree White, WR/KR; Richard White, FS; Terry Wolkerson, DT.

Strengths: Alcorn State has changed to a run-oriented offense, taking advantage of a veteran cache of running backs and a line that averages 6-3, 315 pounds.

Weaknesses: The Braves continued to struggle defensively last season, allowing 300 points and 3,722 yards. Jenkins is a great receiver, but he'll work with an inexperienced quarterback. Alcorn lacks depth at linebacker and in the secondary.

Outlook: Taylor, an LSU transfer, has dreams of being another Steve McNair, but the offense may not be suited for that. Regardless, until the defense improves, Alcorn won't be a serious contender.

Schedule: Troy State, Aug. 31; at Grambling State, Sept. 7; Alabama State, Sept. 21; at Samford, Sept. 28; Arkansas-Pine Bluff, Oct. 5; at Prairie View A&M, Oct. 12; Texas Southern, Oct. 19; Southern, Oct. 26; at Mississippi Valley State, Nov. 9; at Jackson State, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1994.

Nickname: Braves. **Site:** Lorman, Miss.

4. GRAMBLING ST.

Coach: Eddie Robinson (402-149-15, 53 years).

1995 record: 5-6. SWAC: 4-3/4th.

Top players: Chiron Applewhite, QB; Shelly Barnett, FS; James Brooks, OT; Broderick Fobbs, RB; Jay Johnston, RB; Corey Lewis, DB; Larry Lundy, DE; LeJuan Miller, FB; Uzoma Moore, C; Jerry Myers, G; Mike Samson, DT; Solomon Thompson, TE; Anthony Wiggins, DE.

Strengths: With a slew of backs, including Johnston, Fobbs and Miller, it's no secret that the Tigers will want to run on offense.

Weaknesses: Quarterback Kendrick Nord must be replaced, and that won't be easy. Applewhite will get first crack. The defense must get tougher up front.

Outlook: Robinson became the first college or pro football coach to win 400 games in what was otherwise a disappointing 1995. The '96 campaign doesn't figure to be any better.

Schedule: Alcorn State, Sept. 7; Central State (at Pontiac, Mich.), Sept. 14; Langston, Sept. 21; Prairie View A&M (at Dallas), Sept. 28; at Mississippi Valley State, Oct. 12; Arkansas-Pine Bluff (at Shreveport, La.), Oct. 19; Jackson State, Oct. 26; at Texas Southern, Nov. 2; Alabama State, Nov. 9; at North Carolina A&T, Nov. 16; Southern (at New Orleans), Nov. 30.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1989.

Nickname: Tigers. **Site:** Grambling, La.

5. ALABAMA STATE

Coach: Houston Markham (63-31-4, 9 years).

1995 record: 7-3-1. SWAC: 4-2-1/3rd.

Top players: Derrick Cooper, DT; Devin Flowers, DB; Anthony Hall, CB; Gerald Heidelberg, DT; Jason Lucas, KR; Antonio Parker, RB; Trevlin Payne, OT; Alphonso Pogue, S; Robert Vaughn, RB; George Ware, DT.

Strengths: Alabama State returns all four starters in the secondary, led by all-star cornerback Hall and safety Pogue, the team's top returning tackler. Vaughn, a 1,000-yard rusher in '95, headlines a deep backfield.

Weaknesses: The Hornets must replace linebackers Cedric Thornton and Derek Scott, who combined for 176 tackles last season. In addition, two starting defensive linemen must be found. Multi-talented quarterback Alcede Surtain, who ranked among SWAC leaders in rushing and passing, will be missed.

Outlook: Alabama State, coming off its best season since 1991, can only hope to play the role of spoiler. But don't underestimate Markham.

Schedule: Jackson State (at Birmingham, Ala.), Sept. 1; Texas Southern, Sept. 7; at Southern, Sept. 14; at Alcorn State, Sept. 21; at Troy State, Oct. 5; Clark, Oct. 12; at Prairie View A&M, Oct. 19; Alabama A&M (at Birmingham), Oct. 26; at Grambling State, Nov. 9; Mississippi Valley State, Nov. 16; Tuskegee, Nov. 28.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Hornets. **Site:** Montgomery, Ala.

6. TEXAS SOUTHERN

Coach: William Thomas (6-14, 2 years; 34-20-3 overall, 5 years).

1995 record: 2-8. SWAC: 1-6/7th.

Top players: Kiley Brown, WR; Cedric Douglas, QB; Jason Gaines, WR/KR; Lee Harvey, DB; Robert Hawkins, CB; Cedric Johnson, DB; Nicholas Lopez, DE; Ramon Manning, LB; Clifford Thomas, G; David Thomas, WR/KR.

Strengths: Texas Southern returns 17 starters, including 10 on offense. Thomas and Gaines are dangerous receivers and return men. Douglas is back after missing last season because of an NCAA transfer violation.

Weaknesses: Like most SWAC schools, the Tigers lack depth. Team speed and experience also are handicaps for Thomas' troops.

Outlook: Texas Southern, searching for its first winning season since 1977, figures to be much improved, if only because the players are a year older and wiser under Thomas' system. But there's still work to be done.

Schedule: Prairie View A&M, Aug. 31; at Alabama State, Sept. 7; at Sam Houston State, Sept. 28; at Jackson State, Oct. 5; Arkansas-Pine Bluff, Oct. 12; at Alcorn State, Oct. 19; Mississippi Valley State, Oct. 26; Grambling State, Nov. 2; Morgan State, Nov. 9; at Southern, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Tigers. **Site:** Houston.

7. MISSISSIPPI VALLEY

Coach: Larry Dorsey (25-34-3, 6 years).

1995 record: 2-8. SWAC: 2-5/6th.

Top players: Calvin Bolton, OL; Samuel Dickerson, LB; Ray Luckett, RB; Tim McKinley, DL; Dennis Moore, DL; Keith Poindexter, QB; Darrel Randle, OL; Marcus Wade, OLB; Ivan Washington, RB.

Strengths: Quarterback Poindexter and running backs Luckett and Washington will work behind a strong line led by Bolton and Randle.

Weaknesses: The Delta Devils return just three starters from a defense that allowed 4,728 yards and three touchdowns or more in 10 of 11 games. But that may be good.

Outlook: It's going to be a long season for Mississippi Valley State, which has been in a four-season slumber. There's no reason to believe the defense is better, so there's no reason to believe the Delta Devils will be better.

Schedule: at Morris Brown, Aug. 31; Arkansas-Pine Bluff, Sept. 7; at Tennessee-Chattanooga, Sept. 21; at Jackson State, Sept. 28; at Southern, Oct. 5; Grambling State, Oct. 12; Lane, Oct. 19; at Texas Southern, Oct. 26; Prairie View A&M, Nov. 2; Alcorn State, Nov. 9; at Alabama State, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1984.

Nickname: Delta Devils. **Site:** Itta Bena, Miss.

8. PRAIRIE VIEW A&M

Coach: Hensley Sapenter (0-10, 1 year).

1995 record: 0-10. SWAC: 0-7/8th.

Top players: Dedric Clark, OL; Robert Hargrove, OLB; Samuel Hayes, LB; Otis Myles, LB; David McPherson, OT.

Strengths: For a team that hasn't won a game since 1987, this is an inappropriate category. Sapenter and the Panthers have spent a year together. He left the offensive and defensive systems intact after his hiring last July.

Weaknesses: Lack of depth, talent and resources drag down the program. Some Panthers were not even born in 1976, the last time the school posted a winning season.

Outlook: Prairie View has restored partial scholarships for this season, including 16 for the football program. But that's no reason to believe the Panthers will end their NCAA-record 56-game losing streak.

Schedule: at Texas Southern, Aug. 31; Abilene Christian, Sept. 7; Southern, Sept. 21; Grambling State (at Dallas), Sept. 28; at Langston, Oct. 5; Alcorn State, Oct. 12; Alabama State, Oct. 19; at Mississippi Valley State, Nov. 2; Midwestern State, Nov. 9; at Jackson State, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Panthers. **Site:** Prairie View, Texas.

Text by Scott Gremillion.

There's no use splitting hairs: JMU tight end is an NFL prospect

By JOHN O'CONNOR

He has the cape, three electric clippers and the brushes and combs. If you're looking for a barber willing to work about any time for a nominal fee, visit the living quarters of Ed Perry.

At about 20 heads a month, business is steady for Perry, a senior tight end at James Madison who has been cutting hair since the seventh grade. "Once you get good, people come to see you," Perry says.

People, as in NFL scouts, will come to the Shenandoah Valley this fall, and not because they need a trim. It will be to see Perry's other talent—catching footballs.

"I see things in him now as far as pass-catching and getting open that I didn't see in tight ends when I was playing in the NFL," said James Madison offensive line/tight ends coach Ron Mattes, an offensive lineman with Seattle and Chicago from 1986-91.

So many college tight ends are more like a third tackle. Perry, a 6-5, 240-pounder from Richmond, Va., is more like a third flanker.

"Ed has the hands of a wide receiver and runs well (4.7-second speed in the 40-yard dash) for a big man," James Madison coach Alex Wood says. "I think he's got a great opportunity to play in the NFL. As he gets stronger, he becomes more of a prospect."

Perry, a two-time All-Yankee Conference selection, had a team-high 39 receptions for 533 yards as a sophomore. His receptions dipped to 26 last season, in part because a shoulder injury kept him out of two games. The team also was crowded at receiver, as Jay Jones, Juan Dorsey and Macey Brooks combined for 129 catches.

"As long as I'm out there knocking linebackers on their butts and we're winning, it doesn't matter how many passes I catch," Perry says. (The Dukes are 18-7 over the past two seasons, qualifying for the Division I-AA playoffs each season.)

Wood regrets not getting Perry more involved in the Dukes' passing attack. But defenses did their part last season as they frequently blitzed James Madison's one-back offense. The plan was to hurry quarterback Mike Cawley and force Perry to stay in and block.

"People tried to take Ed away, and they took him away," Wood says. "That left other things open, but it's something we've got to solve because we want to use Ed more as a receiver. Maybe we'll use another back this season."

Perry wasn't displeased with the reduced receiving role because he knows scouts want to see his blocking skills. Mattes and Wood think Perry's blocking could use more polish. That is understandable, as Perry played defensive end at Richmond's Highland Springs High and thought he would play outside linebacker or safety in college.

"I sometimes wonder what would have



JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

Along with his prowess on the field, James Madison's Ed Perry is a barber of some renown.

happened if I had played defense," Perry says. "I thank the Lord that (James Madison) needed tight ends. The man upstairs was trying to help me out. Playing in the NFL has always been my dream, but I never thought I'd be in this situation."

Perry spent his redshirt season learning the offensive side of the ball. And though Cawley and his host of school records are gone, Perry should continue to thrive as Willie Gonzalez, a transfer from Georgia Tech, will take over the team's wide-open passing attack.

George Lancaster isn't surprised that Perry is on the NFL scouts' must-see list. Perry was a three-year starter for Lancaster on the Highland Springs basketball team.

"Excellent legs, powerful legs," Lancaster says. "And some people just have the gift of knowing how athletics are supposed to be played. That's Ed. If you told him how to play team handball, he'd be good at it. Athletically, he's a genius."

A few Division I-A football and basketball programs showed interest in Perry, but he didn't qualify academically for freshman eligibility until late in the recruiting season. Perry committed to the Dukes, who stuck

PREDICTIONS

ALL-YANKEE TEAM

OFFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
WR	CY BUTLER, Rhode Island	5-7/165	Sr.
WR	JAY JONES, James Madison	6-1/180	Sr.
TE	ED PERRY, James Madison	6-5/240	Sr.
T	BRIAN CHAMBERLAIN, Northeastern	6-5/300	Sr.
T	MATT McKNIGHT, Villanova	6-7/290	Sr.
G	JOSH BEYER, William & Mary	6-5/295	Sr.
G	RON FELICE, Massachusetts	6-2/293	Jr.
C	PAT DOWNEY, New Hampshire	6-2/285	Jr.
QB	LEO HAMLETT, Delaware	6-1/200	Sr.
RB	FRANK ALESSIO, Massachusetts	5-7/181	Sr.
RB	TORY TAYLOR, Connecticut	5-11/180	Soph.

DEFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
E	JOSH MASTRANGELO, Delaware	6-1/240	Sr.
T	ART BLANCHARD, Richmond	6-1/260	Sr.
E	TODD WILLIAMSON, Maine	6-3/225	Sr.
LB	RALPH D'ANGELO, Delaware	6-1/220	Jr.
LB	JUSTIN RIEMER, Massachusetts	5-11/192	Sr.
LB	LAJON JONES, Rhode Island	6-3/230	Jr.
LB	SHAWN BARBER, Richmond	6-2/210	Jr.
CB	WINSTON OCTOBER, Richmond	5-7/160	Soph.
CB	RON HARRISON, William & Mary	5-9/180	Jr.
S	DARREN SHARPER, William & Mary	6-3/215	Sr.
S	KENNY BAILEY, Delaware	5-11/196	Sr.

SPECIALISTS

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
K	JOHN COURSEY, James Madison	6-0/190	Sr.
P	STEVE FILL, William & Mary	6-3/220	Soph.
KR	CY BUTLER, Rhode Island	5-7/165	Sr.

PLAYERS OF THE YEAR



OFFENSE:

LEO HAMLETT
QB, Delaware



DEFENSE:

DARREN SHARPER
S, William & Mary

with him throughout.

He hopes to be more pumped-up for his senior year. Perry, who has added nearly 50 pounds of muscle at JMU, hopes to add 10 more pounds of upper-body strength in the offseason. If he can use that muscle to consistently move defensive linemen, he may develop into a Sunday player.

If not, Perry already has the tools and experience for another trade. But when NFL camps open next summer, this barber would prefer not to be cut.

John O'Connor covers the Yankee Conference for the Richmond (Va.) Times-Dispatch.

YANKEE TEAM CHARTS

MID-ATLANTIC DIVISION

1. DELAWARE

Coach: Harold "Tubby" Raymond (250-97-3, 30 years).

1995 record: 11-2 (lost in second round of playoffs).

Yankee Mid-Atlantic: 8-0/1st.

Top players: Kenny Bailey, SS; Courtney Batts, WR; Norman Coleman, HB; Eddie Conti, WR/KR; Ralph D'Angelo, LB; Geof Gardner, LB; Dorrell Green, FS; Leo Hamlett, QB; Mark Hondru, DT; Chris Kumpon, OT; Josh Mastrangelo, DE.

Strengths: Hamlett couldn't keep his quarterback job as a sophomore but bloomed as a junior, rushing for 756 yards and passing for 2,086 on the way to winning honors as the Yankee's top offensive player. Batts and Conti may be the league's best set of receivers. Seven starters, including rugged end Mastrangelo, standout linebacker D'Angelo and talented safety Bailey, are back from a defense that allowed only 15.4 points per game.

Weaknesses: The Blue Hens lost three offensive line starters and lack experience behind Hamlett.

Outlook: Raymond, whose teams have qualified for post-season play in four of the past five seasons, believes this experienced squad will be better than the '95 edition that advanced to the second round of the playoffs.

Schedule: Lehigh, Sept. 7; at Villanova, Sept. 14; West Chester, Sept. 21; at Maine, Sept. 28; Boston University, Oct. 5; at Richmond, Oct. 12; Northeastern, Oct. 19; James Madison, Oct. 26; at William & Mary, Nov. 2; at Navy, Nov. 9; Rhode Island, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1995.

Nickname: Blue Hens. **Site:** Newark, Del.

2. WILLIAM & MARY

Coach: Jimmie Laycock (105-74-2, 16 years).

1995 record: 7-4. Yankee Mid-Atlantic: 5-3/T3rd.

Top players: Josh Beyer, OG; Pete Coyne, DT; Luke Cullinane, DE; Steve Fill, P; Ron Harrison, CB; Stefan Moody, OLB; Brian Shallock, K; Darren Sharper, FS; John Teza, OL; Jude Waddy, OLB; Josh Whipple, WR.

Strengths: Laycock's team is solid along both lines and may have a couple of pro prospects in Beyer and Sharper (the Yankee leader in interceptions last season with seven). Moody, a converted defensive back, gives the Tribe a physical, mobile presence at linebacker.

Weaknesses: Sophomore Mike Cook will be raw at quarterback. Derek Fitzgerald and Troy Keen, backs who had careers that featured 1,000-yard seasons, are gone. And linebacker Jason Miller, the Yankee's defensive player of the year, has departed, too.

Outlook: William & Mary, traditionally an offensive power, won with defense last season and figures to take that path again—at least until Cook gains experience and the team develops a consistent runner.

Schedule: at Central Florida, Aug. 31; at Rhode Island, Sept. 7; VMI, Sept. 14; at Bucknell, Sept. 21; New Hampshire, Oct. 5; at James Madison, Oct. 12; at Villanova, Oct. 19; Northeastern, Oct. 26; Delaware, Nov. 2; Massachusetts, Nov. 9; at Richmond, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1993.

Nickname: Tribe. **Site:** Williamsburg, Va.

3. RICHMOND

Coach: Jim Reid (7-3-1, 1 year; 43-32-3 overall, 7 years).

1995 record: 7-3-1. Yankee Mid-Atlantic: 5-3/T3rd.

Top players: Shawn Barber, LB; Art Blanchard, DL; Joe Douglas, OL; Joe Elrod, QB; Jason Giska, DL; Cary Goodwin, LB; Marc Megna, DL; Lamont Neal, DB; Winston October, CB/KR; Mino Rodriguez, RB.

Strengths: Only two starters are missing from a unit that finished second in the Yankee in total defense last season. Barber is one of the league's best linebackers. October is only 5-7, but he's a big-play man at cornerback and a dangerous kick returner. Rodgers gained 911 yards last season despite ankle problems.

Weaknesses: The Spiders, who averaged only 72.5 yards per game passing last season, need to diversify a run-based offense. They still may lack the speed to challenge

the Yankee's stronger teams. And Elrod was inconsistent as a part-time QB starter in past years.

Outlook: It again will be difficult to move the ball on the Spiders, who have their best athletes on defense. Rodgers is the only reliable offensive component returning. Younger players need to produce offensively for Richmond to duplicate its surprising success of '95.

Schedule: Colgate, Sept. 7; at The Citadel, Sept. 14; Massachusetts, Sept. 21; at Boston University, Sept. 28; at Northeastern, Oct. 5; Delaware, Oct. 12; James Madison, Oct. 19; Villanova, Oct. 26; at New Hampshire, Nov. 2; at VMI, Nov. 9; William & Mary, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1987.

Nickname: Spiders. **Site:** Richmond, Va.

4. JAMES MADISON

Coach: Alex Wood (8-4, 1 year).

1995 record: 8-4 (lost in first round of playoffs). Yankee Mid-Atlantic: 6-2/2nd.

Top players: Macey Brooks, WR; John Coursey, K; Nelson Garner, P; Kelvin Jeter, TB; Jay Jones, WR; David Lee, SS; Steve Logan, DE; Ed Perry, TE; John Stein, FS; Julius Williams, DE.

Strengths: Coursey can't get any better percentage-wise. He nailed all 14 of his field-goal attempts last season. Perry could be the league's best pro prospect and is one of the best tight ends in the nation regardless of classification. Jeter is difficult to contain but has been slowed by injuries.

Weaknesses: The Dukes will start untested Willie Gonzalez at quarterback. Gonzalez, a senior who started his career at Georgia Tech after a sterling prep career in Miami, supplants career passing leader Mike Cawley. Eighteen players on James Madison's two-deep list at the close of the '95 season are gone.

Outlook: Wood, a former University of Miami assistant, calls this a rebuilding year. James Madison lacks size and experience but could be among the Yankee's quickest teams. The Dukes loom as dangerous but inconsistent.

Schedule: Shippensburg (Pa.), Sept. 7; at McNeese State, Sept. 14; at Boston University, Sept. 21; New Hampshire, Sept. 28; Maine, Oct. 5; William & Mary, Oct. 12; at Richmond, Oct. 19; at Delaware, Oct. 26; Northeastern, Nov. 2; at Connecticut, Nov. 9; Villanova, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1995.

Nickname: Dukes. **Site:** Harrisonburg, Va.

5. VILLANOVA

Coach: Andy Talley (68-46-1 record, 11 years; 96-65-2 overall, 16 years).

1995 record: 3-8. Yankee Mid-Atlantic: 2-6/T5th.

Top players: Anthony Cowsette, FB; Josh Dolbin, WR; Curtis Dunaway, LB; Brian Finneran, WR; Jason Gattuso, LB; Kyle Helton, WR; Chris Machovina, DE; Matt McKnight, OT; Sean Theis, LB.

Strengths: Clint Park, who transferred from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1994, is back as the Wildcats' mobile quarterback. The Finneran twins, Brian and Brad, are 6-5 pass targets. And Cowsette can be punishing running behind Villanova's I-A-sized line.

Weaknesses: The Wildcats couldn't make defensive stops when necessary last season. They lost six games by six or fewer points. In addition, Villanova quarterbacks threw 14 interceptions.

Outlook: Talley has brought in a new offensive coordinator, Dave Clawson (from Lehigh), to spice up the Wildcats' attack. Clawson's impact could turn things Villanova's way in close games.

Schedule: at Rutgers, Aug. 31; Massachusetts, Sept. 7; Delaware, Sept. 14; Fordham, Sept. 21; at Connecticut, Oct. 5; at Northeastern, Oct. 12; William & Mary, Oct. 19;



Richmond needs to develop a passing game to take pressure off tailback Mino Rodriguez (911 yards last season).

at Richmond, Oct. 26; Rhode Island, Nov. 2; at New Hampshire, Nov. 9; at James Madison, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1992.

Nickname: Wildcats. **Site:** Philadelphia.

6. NORTHEASTERN

Coach: Barry Gallup (13-37-1, 5 years).

1995 record: 4-7. Yankee Mid-Atlantic: 2-6/T5th.

Top players: Brian Chamberlain, OT; Jerome Daniels, OT; Brandon Hanes, K; Andy McCarthy, DE; Jim Murphy, QB; Lloyd Nugent, DE; Matt Quinn, LB; Leroy Robinson, SS; David Smith, WR; Brian Vaughan, TB.

Strengths: Ten offensive starters return, led by the experienced Murphy and Vaughan (742 yards). The Huskies feature two 300-pound blockers in All-America hopeful Chamberlain and Daniels. Smith has been clocked at 4.3 seconds in the 40-yard dash. Hanes is a quality field-goal kicker.

Weaknesses: The Yankee's best secondary last season needs to be rebuilt. The Huskies went from a run-and-shoot alignment to a multiple scheme in '95 and will continue their search for consistent offensive complements to Vaughan. Northeastern scored 20 or fewer points seven times last year.

Outlook: Four of the Huskies' first six games are at home, offering hope for an uncanny fast start. Gallup's team will take any pluses it can get.

Schedule: Maine, Aug. 29; Connecticut, Sept. 14; at Lafayette, Sept. 21; at Massachusetts, Sept. 28; Richmond, Oct. 5; Villanova, Oct. 12; at Delaware, Oct. 19; at William & Mary, Oct. 26; at James Madison, Nov. 2; Boston University, Nov. 9; New Hampshire, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Huskies. **Site:** Boston.

NEW ENGLAND DIVISION

1. CONNECTICUT

Coach: Skip Holtz (12-10, 2 years).

1995 record: 8-3. Yankee New England: 5-3/2nd.

Top players: Dennis Callaghan, OL; TaVarr Closs, OT; Baron Johnson, C; Brad Keatley, LB; Dexter Martin, LB; Anthony McKinney, TE; Dan Newton, WR; Pat Russo, DE; Shane Stafford, QB; Tory Taylor, RB.

Strengths: Taylor ventured to Storrs from the Orlando area and proceeded to run for 1,262 yards as a freshman—a Connecticut season record. He's one of seven starters back from an offense that averaged 397.4 yards last season, the second-best figure in the league. Stafford passed for 11 touchdowns as another first-year player.

Weaknesses: UConn is missing a big-play receiver. Also, the Huskies must replace David DeArmas, who set a school record for field goals and was a quality punter. They also need to show a killer instinct—after starting 6-0 last season, the Huskies dropped three of their next four games and disappeared from Yankee title contention.

Outlook: Third-year coach Holtz, son of the Notre Dame head man, wants to build a consistent I-AA contender before attempting to vault the Huskies to the I-A ranks. The construction is under way, based on an impressive national recruiting effort. Most of the pieces are in place for another solid season.

Schedule: at Buffalo, Sept. 7; at Northeastern, Sept. 14; at New Hampshire, Sept. 21; at Yale, Sept. 28; Villanova, Oct. 5; Maine, Oct. 12; Rhode Island, Oct. 19; Hofstra, Oct. 26; at Boston University, Nov. 2; James Madison, Nov. 9; at Massachusetts, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Huskies. **Site:** Storrs, Conn.

2. RHODE ISLAND

Coach: Floyd Keith (12-21, 3 years; 35-38-2 overall, 7 years).

1995 record: 7-4. Yankee New England: 6-2/1st.

Top players: Lucien Belanger, LB; Alonzo Boyd, WR; Cy Butler, WR/KR; Jared Elwell, LB; Frank Ferrara, DE; Mike Hansen, OT; Chris Hixon, QB; LaJon Jones, LB; Chris Lawson, DB; Shyron Sanford, TB.

Strengths: In his first three seasons at Rhode Island, Hixon has thrown 42 touchdown passes and completed nearly 60 percent of his attempts. He teams most effectively with Butler, who had 700 receiving yards last year. Running back James Jenkins, a transfer from Clemson, joins nine returning offensive starters. Linebacker Jones keys a solid group of defensive holdovers.

Weaknesses: The Rams were last in the Yankee in rushing last season, averaging only 76.9 yards per game. Their two best defensive linemen are gone.

Outlook: For a change, expectations are high. One negative note: Four of Rhode Island's last five games are on the road—including major tests at Connecticut and Delaware.

Schedule: American International, Aug. 31; William & Mary, Sept. 7; New Hampshire, Sept. 14; at Maine, Sept. 21; Brown, Sept. 28; Massachusetts, Oct. 5; at Connecticut, Oct. 19; Boston University, Oct. 26; at Villanova, Nov. 2; at Delaware, Nov. 16; at Hofstra, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1985.

Nickname: Rams. **Site:** Kingston, R.I.

3. NEW HAMPSHIRE

Coach: Bill Bowes (158-90-5, 24 years).

1995 record: 6-5. Yankee New England: 4-4/3rd.

Top players: Jerry Azumah, TB; Al Barrow, WR; Geoffrey Boyd, FS; Chris Bresnahan, QB; Peter Christopher, LB; Matt Crispino, DT; Jon Curry, K/P; Pat Downey, C; Calvin Jones, WR; Brendan Richter, LB; Jeff Tamulski, TE.

Strengths: As a freshman, Azumah rushed for 1,105 yards in only eight games. Two other returning backs—Dan Kreider and Dave Lopez—combined for 619. Bresnahan completed 54.5 percent of his pass attempts in '95 and his top three receivers, including standout tight end Tamulski, are back.



Quarterback Jim Murphy is one of 10 returning offensive starters for Northeastern.

Weaknesses: One of the Yankee's best defenses over the past two years is missing its top two linemen and two defensive backs. The Wildcats turned the ball over 29 times last season.

Outlook: Usually strong defensively, New Hampshire could ride a good offense to whatever success it enjoys in '96. Look for Bowes to notch his 21st winning season in 25 years at UNH.

Schedule: at Rhode Island, Sept. 14; Connecticut, Sept. 21; at James Madison, Sept. 28; at William & Mary, Oct. 5; Lehigh, Oct. 12; at Maine, Oct. 19; Massachusetts, Oct. 26; Richmond, Nov. 2; Villanova, Nov. 9; at Boston University, Nov. 16; at Northeastern, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1994.

Nickname: Wildcats. **Site:** Durham, N.H.

4. MASSACHUSETTS

Coach: Mike Hodges (26-17, 4 years).

1995 record: 6-5. Yankee New England: 3-5/4th.

Top players: Matt Alegi, C; Frank Alessio, TB; Kory Blackwell, CB; Ron Brockington, FB; Anthony Catterton, QB; Ron Felice, G; Bryan Healy, TE; Matt Jordan, TB; Dan Markowski, OT; Justin Riemer, LB; Khari Samuel, LB.

Strengths: The running game and strong defense continue to be Massachusetts' calling cards. Alessio averaged 7.9 yards per carry last season on the way to the Yankee rushing crown (1,276 yards). He'll get help from Jordan, who averaged 7.4 yards per rush. The offensive line returns intact. UMass' top four linebackers also are back.

Weaknesses: The Minutemen want to establish a consistent passing game, something missing for several seasons. They averaged a horrendous 47.5 yards per game in the air last year, with the passing attack netting 483 yards and two touchdowns in 11 games. Option threat Catterton begins his first season as the No. 1 quarterback. There are holes in the secondary and Rene Ingoglia, the Yankee's all-time leading rusher, has moved on.

Outlook: If the veteran Minutemen could get any kind of passing game going, they might contend for a title. With four of UMass' first five games on the road, the team's fate could be decided early.

Schedule: at Villanova, Sept. 7; at Holy Cross, Sept. 14; at Richmond, Sept. 21; Northeastern, Sept. 28; at Rhode Island, Oct. 5; Boston University, Oct. 12; Buffalo, Oct. 19; at New Hampshire, Oct. 26; Maine, Nov. 2; at William & Mary, Nov. 9; Connecticut, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1990.

Nickname: Minutemen. **Site:** Amherst, Mass.

5. BOSTON UNIVERSITY

Coach: Tom Masella (first year).

1995 record: 3-8. Yankee New England: 1-7/75th.

Top players: Billy Arline, DB; Jim Balducci, DE; Julien Dale, RB; Brett Dedman, TE; Kevin Foley, QB; Damon

Mickel, WR; Ivan Padilla, DT; Travis Raitt, C; Jason Ross, DB; Pete Simonian, LB.

Strengths: Maryland transfer Foley returns for his second BU season after throwing for 3,192 yards and 14 touchdowns. Dale, a 250-pound back, was named the Yankee's best rookie two seasons ago (911 yards rushing) but had injury and personal problems last year. Nine defensive starters return, and the Terriers should be strong on both lines. The secondary is experience-laden.

Weaknesses: BU's top four receivers from last season are gone. Out of a run-and-shoot setup, the Terriers rushed for an average of just 86.7 yards per game in '95. BU yielded 27.6 points per outing and was turnover-prone.

Outlook: Former BU assistant Masella has replaced Dan Allen as coach and implemented a multiple one-back scheme that will give the running game a greater role. Better ball control and a stiffer defense are the Terriers' keys to improvement.

Schedule: at St. Mary's (Calif.), Sept. 7; at Maine, Sept. 14; James Madison, Sept. 21; Richmond, Sept. 28; at Delaware, Oct. 5; at Massachusetts, Oct. 12; Hofstra, Oct. 19; at Rhode Island, Oct. 26; Connecticut, Nov. 2; at Northeastern, Nov. 9; New Hampshire, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1994.

Nickname: Terriers. **Site:** Boston.

6. MAINE

Coach: Jack Cosgrove (9-24, 3 years).

1995 record: 3-8. Yankee New England: 1-7/75th.

Top players: Derek Carter, FS; Mike Flynn, OT; Bryan Hawkes, OLB; Bob Jameson, TB; Mitch Maury, TE; Drew O'Connor, WR; Andre Pam, TB; Bert Rich, CB; Dave Riliatt, OT; Todd Williamson, DE.

Strengths: Running backs Pam (1,250 yards in '95) and Jameson (829) give the Black Bears a nice tandem to build around offensively. Maine's offensive line, keyed by Flynn, is among the most powerful in the Yankee.

Weaknesses: To become more competitive in the league, the Bears need a huge injection of speed in the defensive backfield to stop big plays and at receiver to make big plays. Quarterback Mickey Fein, expected to start, struggled last season as a true freshman. The Bears lost four games by a total of 12 points.

Outlook: Maine, which has had three consecutive three-victory seasons, may not be able to sustain that pace. The Bears' ground-game offense is too predictable and they simply lack quality personnel at most positions.

Schedule: at Northeastern, Aug. 29; at Fordham, Sept. 7; Boston University, Sept. 14; Rhode Island, Sept. 21; Delaware, Sept. 28; at James Madison, Oct. 5; at Connecticut, Oct. 12; New Hampshire, Oct. 19; at Massachusetts, Nov. 2; at Hofstra, Nov. 9; Buffalo, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1989.

Nickname: Black Bears. **Site:** Orono, Maine.

Text by John O'Connor.

MAAC TEAM CHARTS

1. DUQUESNE

Coach: Greg Gattuso (20-11, 3 years).

1995 record: 10-1. MAAC: 7-0/1st.

Top players: Todd Amick, DE; Carmen Bricillo, C; Kevin Coates, LB; Bryan Cornell, DB; Andy Crocker, G; Todd Cwynar, TE; Matt Fisher, LB; Dave Loya, QB; Mark Neely, WR; Bruce Nelson, P; Joe Rosato, WR; Bill Sepich, DB, Sr.

Strengths: Loya threw for 2,000 yards last year and directed a running attack that gained 2,012 yards. Rosato and Neely combined for 90 receptions. This is a superior, well-balanced and experienced team on offense. Fisher is a force on defense.

Weaknesses: The defense lost five four-year starters to graduation and is extremely young. This group will have to mature quickly or rely on the offense to match last year's average of 28.5 points per game.

Outlook: Duquesne may be hard-pressed to match last year's 10-1 record. But Gattuso's group has more than enough talent to repeat as MAAC champion.

Schedule: Marist, Sept. 14; at St. John's, Sept. 21; Gannon, Sept. 28; at Siena, Oct. 5; at St. Francis (Pa.), Oct. 12; Georgetown, Oct. 19; Iona, Oct. 26; Fairfield, Nov. 2; at St. Peter's, Nov. 9; at Canisius, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Dukes. **Site:** Pittsburgh.

2. GEORGETOWN

Coach: Bob Benson (15-12, 3 years).

1995 record: 6-3. MAAC: 5-2/2nd.

Top players: Scott Aubuchon, DE/P; Chris Colman, WR; Mike Fioritto, DT; Steve Iorio, TB; Janne Kouri, DT; Steve Ozeranic, OL; Scott Paltos, FB; Steve Pogorelec, NT; Rob Rosenthal, WR; Joe Todisco, TB; Bill Ward, QB.

Strengths: Other than tight end Christopher Smith (a team-leading 28 receptions), the only notable person Georgetown lost on offense was the guy who brought in the water bucket during timeouts. Todisco and Iorio combined for 1,362 yards rushing last season. Ward passed for 1,392 yards and 11 touchdowns but was intercepted 14 times.

Weaknesses: Teams that can get past Georgetown's defensive front three of Kouri, Fioritto and Pogorelec will have success. They're the only defenders with meaningful experience.

Outlook: Like Duquesne, the Hoyas need their defense to catch up with the offense. If it does, Georgetown will contend.

Schedule: at Fairfield, Sept. 21; at Siena, Sept. 28; Marist, Oct. 5; Iona, Oct. 12; at Duquesne, Oct. 19; at Fordham, Oct. 26; Canisius, Nov. 2; at St. John's, Nov. 8; St. Peter's, Nov. 16; Holy Cross, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Hoyas. **Site:** Washington, D.C.

3. MARIST

Coach: Jim Parady (22-17-1, 4 years).

1995 record: 6-4. MAAC: 4-3/T3rd.

Top players: Paul Castillo, KR; Chris Credno, LB; Gavin Cronin, FB; Chris D'Autorio, WR/K; Jon Reed, WR; Jovan Rhodes, RB; Hugh Stanton, C; Maury Wilks, LB; Mario Wilson, SS/CB.

Strengths: "Run to Daylight" should be the theme in 1996. Rhodes needs to return to his freshman form (1,058 yards on the ground) to get the offense cranked up. D'Autorio is a double threat, and Wilson is one of the MAAC's top defensive backs.

Weaknesses: Who's running this ship? Marist rotated two quarterbacks last season and four players took snaps overall. The Foxes need to make major repairs on both lines.

Outlook: If the running game gets going and Marist receives solid play at quarterback, the Foxes could have some bite. But those are big ifs.

Schedule: at Duquesne, Sept. 14; Iona, Sept. 21; at Wagner, Sept. 28; at Georgetown, Oct. 5; Fairfield, Oct. 12; St. John's, Oct. 19; at St. Peter's, Oct. 26; Towson State, Nov. 2; Canisius, Nov. 9; at Siena, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Red Foxes. **Site:** Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

4. ST. JOHN'S

Coach: Bob Ricca (114-69-1, 18 years).

1995 record: 4-6. MAAC: 3-4/T5th.

Top players: Chris Chaisson, LB; Jermaine Creighton, RB; Steve DeAmicis, DB; Kurt Ditzler, DB; Rob Feise, LB; Ken Forte, DB/WR; Bill Grub, WR; Jerry Holman, QB; Anthony Sparacia, QB; Joe Vancott, LB, Soph.

Strengths: Ricca is one of the league's finest coaches—his presence on the sidelines is sometimes the difference in a game. Fifteen starters and 40 lettermen are back. Creighton ran for 914 yards last season despite injuries. And Forte and DeAmicis are big-play defenders.

Weaknesses: Although Holman showed promise in four starts as a freshman, he has to prove he's a No. 1 quarterback.

Outlook: If there is a sleeper team in the MAAC, this is it. If things break right, a league title isn't out of the question.

Schedule: at Sacred Heart (Conn.), Sept. 14; Duquesne, Sept. 21; Fairfield, Sept. 27; at St. Peter's, Oct. 11; at Marist, Oct. 19; at Canisius, Oct. 26; Siena, Nov. 2; Georgetown, Nov. 8; at Iona, Nov. 16; Stony Brook, Nov. 28.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Red Storm. **Site:** Jamaica, N.Y.

5. IONA

Coach: Harold Crocker (48-60-1, 11 years).

1995 record: 3-6. MAAC: 3-4/T5th.

Top players: Luis Barbier, WR; Jeff Bridges, DB; Matt Carlo, LB; Jeff Commander, DE; Ralph Dupont, WR; Cameron Edwards, DT; Whitney Epps, CB; Bill Gipson, OL; Hiram Montanez, WR; Tom Moran, DE.

Strengths: Like St. John's, the Gaels have a terrific coach. Crocker started his career at Iona with 24 consecutive losses but is 48-38-1 since. Epps is a top-of-the-line cornerback and the defensive front is formidable.

Weaknesses: Quarterback Tom Proudan is gone, taking with him virtually every Iona passing record. Somehow, a capable successor must be found. The offensive line is untested.

Outlook: Even with Proudan at quarterback, Iona turned in 3-6 seasons in '94 and '95. Crocker, known for developing quarterbacks, will have to strut his stuff.

Schedule: Wagner, Sept. 14; at Marist, Sept. 21; at Pace, Sept. 28; Canisius, Oct. 5; at Georgetown, Oct. 12; Siena, Oct. 19; at Duquesne, Oct. 26; St. Peter's, Nov. 2; at Fairfield, Nov. 9; St. John's, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Gaels. **Site:** New Rochelle, N.Y.

6. CANISIUS

Coach: Chuck Williams (4-6; 1 year).

1995 record: 4-6. MAAC: 4-3/T3rd.

Top players: Nick Adinolfi, TB; Chris Carlson, FS; Scott Dochast, DE; Mike Fliss, LB; Mark Kolbe, WR; Christian Kramer, WR; John Prizner, TE; Brad Steve, LB; Brian Swatland, DT; Frank Zabawa, DE; Tony Zoratti, OT.

Strengths: Kolbe, Kramer and Prizner have terrific hands, and Canisius can choose from three quarterbacks to get them the ball. Question: Can the young line give everyone enough time? Zabawa and Swatland will provide defensive pressure.

Weaknesses: Canisius will miss special-teams players Aaron Fix, Tom Bernardo and C.J. Hurrell. This also is a team in need of a running back.

Outlook: While the Golden Griffins have depth at quarterback, someone must assert himself. Canisius will be lucky to finish in the first division—although Williams has voiced optimism.

Schedule: at Gannon, Sept. 14; St. Peter's, Sept. 28; at Iona, Oct. 5; Siena, Oct. 12; at Fairfield, Oct. 19; St. John's, Oct. 26; at Georgetown, Nov. 2; at Marist, Nov. 9; Duquesne, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Golden Griffins. **Site:** Buffalo.

7. ST. PETER'S

Coach: Mark Collins (3-15, 2 years).

1995 record: 2-7. MAAC: 2-5/T7th.

Top players: Jeremy Bartuck, QB; Oscar Bathen, TB; William Bryant, LB; Phil Collins, WR; Raymond Kuebler, C; Bob Pula, OL; Tom Reali, FB/P; Lee Regenbogen, DB/LB; Colin Scheiffer, LB; Jade Tanguay, WR/KR.

Strengths: Reali, who missed half of the season with a shoulder injury, averaged 5.4 yards per carry. Scheiffer averaged 9.9 tackles per game.

Weaknesses: The Peacocks lack experience and aren't physically imposing. They were shut out in four of their final five games last season.

Outlook: St. Peter's remains a few years—and more than a few players—away. The performance of Bartuck, a transfer from Colgate, will tell a lot about the offense.

Schedule: Siena, Sept. 21; at Canisius, Sept. 28; at Fairfield, Oct. 5; St. John's, Oct. 11; at Wagner, Oct. 19; Marist, Oct. 26; at Iona, Nov. 2; Duquesne, Nov. 9; at Georgetown, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Peacocks. **Site:** Jersey City, N.J.

8. SIENA

Coach: To be announced.

1995 record: 0-9. MAAC: 0-7/8th.

Top players: Mike Byron, QB; Ray Clark, TE; Mike Courtney, QB; Reggie Greene, TB; Steve Mazuroski, OL; Bob Mengel, OL; Gabe Ryan, FB; Jeff Sawulski, WR; Paul Serie, DB; Scott Snyder, LB.

Strengths: Greene, I-AA's leading rusher and top all-purpose

PREDICTIONS

ALL-MAAC TEAM

OFFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
WR	MARK NEELY, Duquesne	6-0/185	Sr.
WR	JOE ROSATO, Duquesne	5-10/165	Jr.
TE	TODD Cwynar, Duquesne	6-4/210	Sr.
T	BOB MENGEL, Siena	6-2/240	Soph.
T	TONY ZORATTI, Canisius	6-2/230	Soph.
G	STEVE OZERANIC, Georgetown	6-2/240	Jr.
G	ANDY CROCKER, Duquesne	6-3/240	Sr.
C	CARMEN BRICILLO, Duquesne	6-1/235	Jr.
QB	DAVE LOYA, Duquesne	6-3/210	Jr.
RB	REGGIE GREENE, Siena	5-8/172	Jr.
RB	JOVAN RHODES, Marist	5-10/175	Jr.

DEFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
E	FRANK ZABAWA, Canisius	6-4/230	Sr.
T	JANNE KOURI, Georgetown	6-3/255	Sr.
T	BRIAN SWATLAND, Canisius	6-2/250	Jr.
E	TODD AMICK, Duquesne	6-1/230	Sr.
LB	WILLIAM BRYANT, St. Peter's	6-2/220	Sr.
LB	MATT FISHER, Duquesne	6-1/225	Soph.
LB	MAURY WILKS, Marist	6-0/225	Sr.
CB	WHITNEY EPPS, Iona	6-0/175	Jr.
CB	KEN FORTE, St. John's	6-2/181	Sr.
S	MARIO WILSON, Marist	5-11/167	Jr.
S	CHRIS CARLSON, Canisius	6-1/90	Sr.

SPECIALISTS

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
K	CHRIS D'AUTORIO, Marist	5-11/192	Sr.
P	SCOTT AUBUCHON, Georgetown	6-3/200	Jr.
KR	PAUL CASTILLO, Marist	5-3/150	Soph.

PLAYERS OF THE YEAR

OFFENSE: REGGIE GREENE, RB, Siena

DEFENSE: FRANK ZABAWA, E, Canisius

back last season, is the most gifted player in the league. Greene ran for 162.3 yards per game.

Weaknesses: The Saints have decent skill players to complement Greene, but their lines just don't match up with the rest of the league.

Outlook: Well, at least there is one. After Siena posted a 2-26 record over the past three seasons, school officials decided to drop football. But the board of trustees proceeded to reverse the decision—and even increased funding. On the field, though, there's little reason for optimism at this juncture.

Schedule: at St. Peter's, Sept. 21; Georgetown, Sept. 28; Duquesne, Oct. 5; at Canisius, Oct. 12; at Iona, Oct. 19; Fairfield, Oct. 26; at St. John's, Nov. 2; at Monmouth, Nov. 9; Marist, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Saints. **Site:** Loudonville, N.Y.

9. FAIRFIELD

Coach: Kevin Kiesel (first year, 15-15-1 overall, 3 years).

1995 record: 1996 will be program's first season.

Top players: Program's first season.

Strengths: A strong commitment by the administration, which is something that can't be underestimated at this level.

Weaknesses: This is Fairfield's first season in the MAAC, first season in Division I-AA ... heck, first season period (since its club-football days that ended a decade ago). The Stags have shortcomings everywhere.

Outlook: What can you say about a team that hasn't played a game but already has had two coaches? Fairfield hired Boston University assistant Tom Masella in 1995, but just after his "I'm happy to be here speech" at the preseason luncheon, he resigned to take the top job at BU. The Stags surely will take their lumps in the team's first couple of seasons.

Schedule: Central Connecticut State, Sept. 14; Georgetown, Sept. 21; at St. John's, Sept. 27; St. Peter's, Oct. 5; at Marist, Oct. 12; Canisius, Oct. 19; at Siena, Oct. 26; at Duquesne, Nov. 2; Iona, Nov. 9.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Stags. **Site:** Fairfield, Conn.

Text by Rich Thomaselli, Poughkeepsie

(N.Y.) Journal.

PIONEER TEAM CHARTS

1. DRAKE

Coach: Rob Ash (47-21-2, 7 years, 98-57-5 overall, 16 years).
1995 record: 8-1-1. Pioneer: 5-0/1st.

Top players: Rob Berkley, WR; Jeremy Fisher, DB; Anthony Fuller, LB; Felix Gallagher, G; Jason Grova, RB; B.J. Hellyer, DB; Charlie Henry, TE; Charlie Schimberg, RB; Nate Schneider, C; Jace Smrcka, DT; Matt Sneller, P/K; Ben Wolford, QB.

Strengths: The Bulldogs, a self-destructive team in previous years, finally got over the hump and beat Dayton to win the league title last season. As a result, they should be full of confidence in 1996. If Wolford, a senior, can excel in his first year as a starter, the offense could be good again. Grova is coming off a super freshman year (754 yards in seven games, 5.2 yards a carry). Sneller is one of the best kickers in the league.

Weaknesses: Ash is concerned about his cornerbacks, since none of them played a snap last season; last year Drake had two good ones in Tom Boecker and Kerman Mason. The departure of all-league linebacker Matt Garvis leaves a hole in the middle, and both defensive ends will be new.

Outlook: Despite having some holes, Drake appears to be the class of the league. The roster is stocked with upperclassmen waiting to assume starting roles. Wolford's performance is the biggest question mark, but Ash says Wolford has better physical tools than his predecessor, the cagey Roy Fletcher. The Bulldogs enter the season with a seven-game winning streak.

Schedule: Morningside, Sept. 7; at St. Norbert, Sept. 14; San Diego, Sept. 21; at St. Mary's, Sept. 28; Butler, Oct. 5; at Evansville, Oct. 12; Valparaiso, Oct. 19; at Dayton, Oct. 26; at Aurora, Nov. 2; Wayne State, Nov. 9; at Northwestern (Iowa), Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Bulldogs. **Site:** Des Moines, Iowa.

2. DAYTON

Coach: Mike Kelly (145-27-1, 15 years).

1995 record: 9-2. Pioneer: 4-1/2nd.

Top players: Zack Cline, OT; Chris Fluharty, FS; Jim Homoki, LB; Pat Hugar, WR; Ryan Hulme, K; Kevin Johns, QB; Curt Lemmerbrock, OT; Josh Lemmon, G; Dan Paulick, WR; Beau Schuetz, DB; Bill Schmidt, DE.

Strengths: Only nine starters return, but the Flyers have veterans at most positions. Both lines should be solid. Homoki and Fluharty lend stability to the defense. Kelly gives Hugar and Paulick high marks as pass receivers. Cline has all-league talent.

Weaknesses: There is a lack of depth at virtually every position. Johns, a junior, has talent but very little experience. The stable of running backs is the weakest Dayton has had in many years.

Outlook: The Flyers will give a good account of themselves, as usual, but they may lack the overall talent to regain first place from Drake after tying for the title in 1994. The schedule certainly won't help: Dayton plays only one of its five league games at home, where the Flyers are 73-8-1 in the past seven years. Kelly has the highest winning percentage (.841) of any current coach in Division I.

Schedule: Morehead State, Sept. 7; Georgetown (Ky.), Sept. 14; Wisconsin-Platteville, Sept. 21; at Towson State, Sept. 28; at Evansville, Oct. 5; Robert Morris, Oct. 12; at Butler, Oct. 19; Drake, Oct. 26; at Valparaiso, Nov. 2; Wofford, Nov. 9; at San Diego, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Flyers. **Site:** Dayton, Ohio.

3. SAN DIEGO

Coach: To be announced.

1995 record: 5-5. Pioneer: 3-2/3rd.

Top players: Buddy Brown, DL; Mike Buhler, P/K; Jeb Dougherty, SS; Duncan Hardy, TE; Evan Hlavacek, RB/WR; Kujanga Jackson, DB; Jared Keo, RB; John Khamis, QB; Ryan Marcos, DL; Sal Navarra, LB/DB; Todd Plutchok, OT; Jon Walker, C.

Strengths: Buhler is one of the best punters in the league. Hlavacek is a dangerous runner and receiver. The secondary remains strong even after the departure of all-star free safety Doug Popovich. Brown and Marcos are solid

defensive linemen. Walker and Plutchok are exceptional offensive linemen.

Weaknesses: Walker and Plutchok are exceptional, but the guards alongside them have no experience. The defensive line needs reinforcements. The offensive backfield lacks speed. Longtime coach Brian Fogarty unexpectedly resigned in May to take an administrative job in the athletic department.

Outlook: The Toreros could have tied for the Pioneer title last year if they had beaten Drake in the season finale, and they gave the Bulldogs a good fight. A strong senior season from Khamis would make them contenders again.

Schedule: at Chico State (Calif.), Sept. 7; California Lutheran, Sept. 14; at Drake, Sept. 21; Valparaiso, Sept. 28; at St. Mary's (Cal.), Oct. 5; Evansville, Oct. 19; at Butler, Oct. 26; Whittier, Nov. 2; at Azusa Pacific, Nov. 9; Dayton, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Toreros. **Site:** San Diego.

4. VALPARAISO

Coach: Tom Home (22-48-1, 7 years; 48-79-2 overall, 13 years).

1995 record: 5-5. Pioneer: 1-4/7th.

Top players: Ike Anigho, FS; Nick Browder, QB; Bob Cracknell, FB; John Harrington, DE; Matt Kulp, DT; Scott Latzke, LB; Eric Rodbro, C; Ronnie Sazone, CB; Sahl Shaheed, SS; Michael Tolbert, WR.

Strengths: Browder is the most gifted quarterback in the league, and Tolbert (38 catches, 517 yards last season) is one of its best receivers. A potentially good defense—led by Latzke, Sazone, Kulp and Harrington—should have the maturity it lacked last season. Browder, a senior and two-year starter, needs 1,642 yards to become the school's career total offense leader.

Weaknesses: The Crusaders will be hard-pressed to replace Scott Hinrichs, a 6-4 receiver who drew extra attention from enemy defenses in an outstanding 1995 senior season. While they're at it, the Crusaders had better find a running back to replace the departed Ozzie Young and three new offensive linemen.

Outlook: Valparaiso has demonstrated in the past two seasons that it can play with anybody in the league. Trouble is, it hasn't won often enough. The Crusaders have the talent to make a serious run in '96, but they must beat Drake or Dayton to do it. In three seasons in the league, they haven't yet (a combined 0-6).

Schedule: at Hope, Sept. 7; Alma, Sept. 14; Morehead State, Sept. 21; at San Diego, Sept. 28; Butler, Oct. 12; at Drake, Oct. 19; at Evansville, Oct. 26; Dayton, Nov. 2; Aurora, Nov. 9; at Kentucky Wesleyan, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Crusaders. **Site:** Valparaiso, Ind.

5. BUTLER

Coach: Ken LaRose (21-19, 4 years).

1995 record: 2-8. Pioneer: 1-4/7th.

Top players: Kyle Condon, DB; Husani Dillon, WR; Ron Griswold, NT; John Knight, WR; Damon Moore, CB; Jim Piko, WR; Naim Sanders, RB; Eli Stoddard, QB; Ryan Vermillion, DT; Nick Winings, LB.

Strengths: There are plenty of experienced linemen on both sides of the ball. The entire starting offensive line is back (including 300-pound tackle Jamie Ford), and so are four of the five starting defensive linemen, including stand-out Griswold. With All-American running back Arnold Mickens no longer around, the Bulldogs should have much better offensive balance.

Weaknesses: Confidence could be in short supply after last season, when Butler plunged from a tie for first place in 1994 to a three-way tie for last; it was the most losses in Butler football history. Mickens' departure leaves no proven runner, and Stoddard has yet to start a game at quarterback. Adam Burrell's departure leaves a void at linebacker. There are eight starters back on defense, but that defense allowed 31 points a game last season.

Outlook: Butler could bounce back. Sophomore tailback Sanders will run effectively and wide receivers Knight, Piko and Dillon can catch the ball if Stoddard lives up to his high school reputation as a good passer.

Schedule: Towson State, Sept. 9; at Robert Morris, Sept. 14; Millikin, Sept. 21; at Drake, Oct. 5; at Valparaiso, Oct. 12; Dayton, Oct. 19; San Diego, Oct. 26; Evansville, Nov. 2; at

PREDICTIONS

ALL-PIONEER TEAM

OFFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
WR	DAN PAULICK, Dayton	6-1/175	Sr.
WR	MICHAEL TOLBERT, Valparaiso	6-0/182	Sr.
TE	CHARLIE HENRY, Drake	6-4/220	Sr.
T	ZACK CLINE, Dayton	6-2/261	Sr.
T	TODD PLUTCHOK, San Diego	6-0/277	Sr.
G	FELIX GALLAGHER, Drake	6-5/315	Jr.
G	JOSH LEMMON, Dayton	6-2/220	Sr.
C	JON WALKER, San Diego	6-0/275	Jr.
QB	NICK BROWDER, Valparaiso	6-2/184	Sr.
RB	JASON GROVE, Drake	6-1/205	Soph.
RB	EVAN HLAVACEK, San Diego	5-11/170	Sr.

DEFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
E	JIM SCHAEFER, Evansville	6-1/225	Jr.
T	MATT KULP, Valparaiso	5-11/222	Sr.
T	RON GRISWOLD, Butler	5-11/210	Jr.
E	BILL SCHMIDT, Dayton	6-3/236	Sr.
LB	SAL NAVARRA, San Diego	5-11/182	Jr.
LB	ANTHONY FULLER, Drake	5-10/210	Sr.
LB	JIM HOMOKI, Dayton	6-0/200	Sr.
CB	RONNIE SAZONE, Valparaiso	5-6/157	Sr.
CB	DAMON MOORE, Butler	5-10/160	Jr.
S	JEB DOUGHERTY, San Diego	6-0/185	Sr.
S	CHRIS FLUHARTY, Dayton	6-2/201	Sr.

SPECIALISTS

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
K	RYAN HULME, Dayton	6-1/185	Jr.
P	MATT SNELLER, Drake	5-10/207	Sr.
KR	PAT HUGAR, Dayton	5-10/190	Sr.

PLAYERS OF THE YEAR

OFFENSE: NICK BROWDER, QB, Valparaiso

DEFENSE: JEB DOUGHERTY, SS, San Diego

St. Joseph's (Ind.), Nov. 9.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Bulldogs. **Site:** Indianapolis.

6. EVANSVILLE

Coach: Robin Cooper (27-22, 5 years; 46-29 overall, 8 years).

1995 record: 5-5. Pioneer: 1-4/7th.

Top players: Pat Doorhy, LB; Shawn Eveland, WR; Tom Fravel, C; Eric Gardner, OLB; Eric Goebel, QB; Bryan Jenkins, RB/WR; Nate Kukla, TE; Shane Ricketts, LB; Tony Salpietra, RB; Jim Schaefer, DE; Mark Thomas, OLB.

Strengths: Difficult to say. The Purple Aces have had major turnover, which is certain to give the '96 team a different personality. Sophomore tailback Salpietra was among a number of solid players who surfaced last season as the Aces discovered a running game. Schaefer and Thomas are defensive mainstays.

Weaknesses: The departure of stalwarts such as quarterback Eric Fish, linebacker Adam Bruggenschmidt and safety James Duncan leave this team with many question marks. Except for Fravel, the offensive line is untested. Goebel, a senior, has little experience; he'll battle redshirt freshman Drew Purcell for the starting job.

Outlook: Evansville missed some golden opportunities for league wins last season and may find it even more difficult during what appears to be a rebuilding year.

Schedule: at Cumberland, Sept. 14; at Quincy, Sept. 21; McKendree, Sept. 28; Dayton, Oct. 5; Drake, Oct. 12; at San Diego, Oct. 19; Valparaiso, Oct. 26; at Butler, Nov. 2; at Kentucky Wesleyan, Nov. 9; Morehead State, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Purple Aces. **Site:** Evansville, Ind.

Text by Bucky Albers of the Dayton (Ohio) Daily News.

Unsung linebacker helps lead unsung Hofstra to I-AA success

By J.P. PELZMAN

In November 1992, the Hofstra Flying Dutchmen were a bruised and battered football team. They had just finished their second season in Division I-AA with a 50-6 loss at perennial I-AA power Montana to finish the year 4-6, Hofstra's first losing campaign since 1985. It was a precipitous drop for a program that had made five consecutive Division III playoff appearances from 1986-90.

At the same time, Eugene McAleer was a 200-pound linebacker finishing a stellar high school career at Archbishop Ryan in Philadelphia. Yet the undersized McAleer was attracting only token attention from I-AA schools such as Delaware and Villanova.

Voila. Three years later, Hofstra was in the I-AA playoffs, and McAleer was an All-American middle linebacker. The parallels are obvious.

"We've come so far in such a short period of time," Hofstra coach Joe Gardi says.

As has McAleer. "He's not that big," Gardi says of the 6-0, 230-pounder, "and if you clock him, he's not that fast. But he's got an instinct for the football that you can't coach. He's what our defense is all about. I want to call them overachievers, but they get mad when I say it."

As a true freshman in 1993, McAleer played on special teams and made nine tackles. In '94, after sharing time at linebacker at the beginning of the season, he started the last five games and finished with 58 tackles, fifth on the team.

While McAleer was becoming a key contributor, Hofstra was starting to become a factor in I-AA. A 28-6 victory over New Hampshire in October 1994 helped to propel the Dutchmen into the I-AA Top 25 for the first time, and they won their first seven games of the season before losing to Towson State, 24-21.

Still, Hofstra finished 8-1-1 after a 41-41 tie at Delaware in the season finale. In that game, Dutchmen wide receiver Wayne Chrebet caught five touchdown passes to tie a I-AA record held by Jerry Rice. Last season, Chrebet, like Rice, was a starting wide receiver in the NFL (Chrebet had 66 receptions for the New York Jets). Chrebet joined the Jets as a free agent and became a starter by opening day. His progression gives McAleer hope as he enters his



Thanks largely to overachievers like McAleer, Hofstra has emerged as a powerful I-AA program.

senior season.

"I know I'm not the biggest or strongest or fastest," McAleer says, "but I know I can play football. As soon as the ball is snapped, I know where it's going. I don't look at myself as an overachiever. I look at myself as a good football player."

Last season, McAleer anchored a young defense that had lost seven starters from the year before. Hofstra finished second in I-AA in scoring defense and seventh in rushing defense, and McAleer had a team-high 133 tackles, including 20 in a 36-10 victory over Liberty. He also forced one fumble and recovered another in that game.

"That was a dominating performance," Gardi says.

Gardi brought in its first scholarship class last season and won its first 10 games, moving to No. 7 in the I-AA poll. Critics said the Dutchmen had benefited from a weak schedule, and the charge wasn't without merit, considering Hofstra beat teams such as Cal State Sacramento, Charleston Southern, Fordham and Lafayette.

PREDICTIONS

ALL-INDEPENDENTS

OFFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
WR	KAMIL LOUD, Cal Poly SLO	6-1/175	Jr.
WR	JOEY STOCKTON, W. Kentucky	5-9/171	Jr.
TE	ROBERT FRASIER, Robert Morris	6-4/225	Sr.
T	TURNER GOODWIN, W. Kentucky	6-1/284	Sr.
T	ED ELLIS, Buffalo	6-7/317	Sr.
G	JASON HASS, Jacksonville State	6-4/297	Jr.
G	DeMINGO GRAHAM, Hofstra	6-4/300	Jr.
C	DAN WILLIAMS, Wofford	6-2/320	Jr.
QB	SEAN LAIRD, St. Mary's	6-1/172	Jr.
RB	ANTWAN FLOYD, W. Kentucky	5-10/218	Sr.
RB	LAWRENCE WORTHINGTON, Lib.	6-1/200	Sr.

DEFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
E	BILL SOMMERS, Wagner	6-2/250	Sr.
T	ANDRE JETHROE, Youngstown St.	5-10/240	Sr.
T	JIM SHANNON, Hofstra	6-2/260	Sr.
E	JEFF GALLYAN, Southern Utah	6-1/250	Sr.
LB	CRAIG GUEST, Buffalo	6-3/230	Sr.
LB	EUGENE McALEER, Hofstra	6-0/230	Sr.
LB	CHRIS GARZA, Southern Utah	6-1/240	Sr.
CB	PAUL HUMPHRIES, Wofford	5-10/174	Sr.
CB	DANTE PAYNE, Robert Morris	5-10/190	Jr.
S	ERIC MIMS, Jacksonville State	5-9/180	Jr.
S	VINNIE SASSO, Monmouth	5-10/190	Jr.

SPECIALISTS

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
K	DAVE ETTINGER, Hofstra	6-0/215	Sr.
P	TOM ANTONGIOVANNI, St. Mary's	6-1/184	Jr.
KR	ANDREW McFADDEN, Liberty	5-9/197	Sr.

PLAYERS OF THE YEAR

OFFENSE: JOEY STOCKTON, WR, Western Kentucky
DEFENSE: EUGENE McALEER, LB, Hofstra

But the Dutchmen proved their worth to both the doubters and the NCAA selection committee by staying close against powerful Marshall in their regular-season finale. Hofstra led 21-20 late in the third quarter before losing, 30-28, to the eventual I-AA runner-up.

"We showed we can play with anybody," McAleer says.

The season ended in disappointment a week later with a 38-17 first-round playoff loss to Delaware, but McAleer remains upbeat.

"Ever since I came here," he says, "every year has been better and better." Not bad when you consider that when he first was recruited, McAleer had no clue where Hofstra was located (in Hempstead, N.Y., on Long Island). And when he went back to visit some of his old high school chums as a Hofstra freshman, he drew plenty of blank looks when he told them where he was playing.

"That hurt me a lot," McAleer says. "(But) now we're on the map. People know about the school."

Thanks largely to overachievers like Eugene McAleer. But just don't call him one.

J.P. Pelzman covers Hofstra football for *Newsday*.

I-AA INDEPENDENTS TEAM CHARTS

1. LIBERTY

Coach: Sam Rutigliano (44-32, 7 years).

1995 record: 8-3.

Top players: Damon Bomar, LB; Rodney DeGrate, DT; Jarrod Everson, DL; Ruben Freeman, DE; Craig Henry, CB; Andrew McFadden, WR/RB; Ulysses Moore, OT; Kenyatta Murray, CB; Jessie Riley, LB; Lawrence Worthington, RB.

Strengths: The Flames return 15 starters. McFadden—who also will line up at receiver—and Worthington are huge weapons. Three starters return on each line.

Weaknesses: Few but significant. Liberty has no proven starter at quarterback or tight end. Eric Colvard, the No. 9 punter in I-AA a year ago, also must be replaced.

Outlook: Liberty won a school-record eight games in '95, but a 7-6 loss to Georgia Southern probably cost the Flames a playoff berth. This year, the most experience in school history should translate into at least nine wins and Liberty's first playoff appearance.

Schedule: at E. Tennessee St., Aug. 29; Western Carolina, Sept. 7; Delaware State, Sept. 14; at Morgan State, Sept. 21; Indiana State, Sept. 28; Hofstra, Oct. 12; at Western Kentucky, Oct. 19; Charleston Southern, Oct. 26; at Hampton, Nov. 2; Livingstone, Nov. 9; at Ga. Southern, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Flames. **Site:** Lynchburg, Va.

2. HOFSTRA

Coach: Joe Gardi (48-15-2, 6 years).

1995 record: 10-2 (including 0-1 in I-AA playoffs).

Top players: Pat Clark, LB; Dave Ettinger, K; Jon Evjen, LB; DeMingo Graham, CB; Cedric Johnson, CB; Jimmy Jones, RB; Eugene McAleer, LB; Erik Michael, WR; Paul Que, RB, Jim Shannon, DT.

Strengths: Ettinger led I-AA with 22 field goals in 1995. McAleer and Shannon lead a unit that ranked second nationally in scoring defense.

Weaknesses: The loss of quarterback Kharon Brown, third in the nation in total offense last year, leaves a huge void. It's unclear what impact the loss of the offensive and defensive coordinators will have.

Outlook: Hofstra ranked in the nation's top 10 in seven statistical categories last season. Look for more of the same now that the school has doubled its scholarships to 30. Expect Gardi's troops to make their second consecutive playoff appearance this fall.

Schedule: Cal State Sacramento, Sept. 7; at SW Texas State, Sept. 14; Western Illinois, Sept. 21; at Charleston Southern, Sept. 28; at Liberty, Oct. 12; at Boston U., Oct. 19; at Connecticut, Oct. 26; Buffalo, Nov. 2; Maine, Nov. 9; Youngstown State, Nov. 16; Rhode Island, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1995.

Nickname: Flying Dutchmen. **Site:** Hempstead, N.Y.

3. SAMFORD

Coach: Pete Hurt (11-10-1, 2 years).

1995 record: 7-4.

Top players: Robert Dean, G; Robbie Gibbons, G; James Griffith, TB; Jeff Morris, FS; Bernard Nwagwu, LB; Mike Porter, WR; Joe Michael Robertson, DE; Eric Turner, CB; Shawn Williams, FB; Bart Yancey, QB.

Strengths: Thirteen starters return. Yancey should become the Bulldogs' career passing leader this season. If Dean is ready to go after knee surgery, Yancey may have more time.

Weaknesses: If Dean doesn't return, Samford has no offensive linemen back. That could hurt, since Yancey has problems under pressure.

Outlook: Last year's freshman class, 44 strong, is a year away from making a significant impact. The Bulldogs play the four teams that beat them in 1995 on the road this season. Still, Samford should have its best season since 1992, Terry Bowden's last as its coach.

Schedule: Knoxville College, Sept. 7; Austin Peay, Sept. 14; at Tennessee State, Sept. 21; Alcorn State, Sept. 28; Nicholls State, Oct. 5; at Central Florida, Oct. 12; at Jacksonville State, Oct. 19; at Stephen F. Austin, Oct. 26; Wofford, Nov. 2; UT Martin, Nov. 16; at Troy State, Nov. 21.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1992.

Nickname: Bulldogs. **Site:** Birmingham, Ala.

4. YOUNGSTOWN ST.

Coach: Jim Tressel (87-41-2, 10 years).

1995 record: 3-8.

Top players: Jake Andreadis, TB; Andre Jethroe, DT; Jake Smallfield, TE; Demond Tidwell, QB; William Walker, WR.

Strengths: Tradition. Coaching. Pride—especially after a painful 1995. The receivers are quick and the tight ends are

solid. Jethroe is one of the best defensive tackles in I-AA.

Weaknesses: Quarterback Mark Brungard, who led the Penguins to two national titles, is gone. So are two All-Americans on defense. In the spring, Tressel switched several players from offense to defense and vice versa. How those players handle change will determine much of Youngstown's fate.

Outlook: Youngstown State, the winningest Division I team from 1990-94, is coming off its worst season since 1986. Tressel can't get the Penguins back to the title game this year, but he'll get them moving in the right direction.

Schedule: Wofford, Aug. 29; Slippery Rock, Sept. 5; at Kent, Sept. 14; at Illinois State, Sept. 21; Clarion, Sept. 28; at Buffalo, Oct. 12; Ashland, Oct. 19; Northwestern State, Oct. 26; Northern Iowa, Nov. 2; at SW Missouri State, Nov. 9; at Hofstra, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1994.

Nickname: Penguins. **Site:** Youngstown, Ohio.

5. CAL POLY SLO

Coach: Andre Patterson (12-10, 2 years).

1995 record: 5-6.

Top players: Mike Allshouse, TB; Sam Genzone, G; David Lombardi, CB; Kamil Loud, WR; Andrew Parkinson, DT; Jon Peck, WR; Ryan Thomas, WR; Jonathan Trotter, LB; Antonio Warren, RB; Brad Welch, G.

Strengths: The Mustangs boast some of the best receivers in I-AA and experience at running back and in the secondary. Five transfers from Pacific should help.

Weaknesses: Mike Fisher, who shattered school passing records and ranked 12th in I-AA in total offense last year, is gone. San Jose State transfer Allie Abrew could be the answer. There's experience but little depth on either line.

Outlook: A demanding schedule includes an early trip to defending national champion Montana. Loud, Peck and Thomas give the Mustangs an explosive receiving corps but must adjust to a new quarterback.

Schedule: at Idaho State, Sept. 7; at Montana, Sept. 14; Weber State, Sept. 21; Central Washington, Sept. 28; at Idaho, Oct. 5; St. Mary's, Oct. 12; Southern Utah, Oct. 19; at Western Illinois, Oct. 26; UC Davis, Nov. 2; at Montana State, Nov. 9; at CS Sacramento, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Mustangs. **Site:** San Luis Obispo, Calif.

6. BUFFALO

Coach: Craig Cirbus (3-8, 1 year).

1995 record: 3-8.

Top players: Gerald Carlson, P/K; Michael Chichester, CB; Ed Ellis, OT; Craig Guest, ILB; Keith Hansen, NG; Eric Lee, S; Hardy Mitchell, DE; Billy Payne, OLB; John Sandusky, C; Anthony Swan, TB.

Strengths: Carlson is a pro prospect, as is Guest. Swan is a game-breaking tailback. The Bulls blocked 11 kicks in 1995.

Weaknesses: Buffalo still isn't at the I-AA scholarship limit, but the addition of 15-18 this year puts the Bulls over 50. Still, depth is a problem.

Outlook: The Bulls have posted consecutive 3-8 seasons after a 1-10 debut in I-AA in 1993. Barring another injury-filled season, Cirbus should continue the improvement in his second season as coach. But Buffalo still has lots of work to do before it joins the I-A ranks in 1999.

Schedule: Illinois State, Aug. 29; Connecticut, Sept. 7; at Colgate, Sept. 14; at Lehigh, Sept. 21; Edinboro, Sept. 28; Cornell, Oct. 5; Youngstown State, Oct. 12; at Massachusetts, Oct. 19; at Hofstra, Nov. 2; New Haven, Nov. 9; at Maine, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Bulls. **Site:** Buffalo.

7. JACKSONVILLE ST.

Coach: Bill Burgess (83-40-4, 11 year).

1995 record: 7-4.

Top players: Warren Blair, DE; Jason Hass, G; Amel Jackson, TB; Teon Knox, OLB; David Mahaffey, DE; Eric Mims, SS; Eurosus Parker, FS; Lee Sutherland, K; Sidney Tyus, OLB; Jon Whiddon, OT.

Strengths: The Gamecocks return 16 starters, including nine on defense. A year's experience should hasten the development of two young quarterbacks. Mahaffey's move from tackle should help the pass rush. Mims is an excellent safety.

Weaknesses: Size is suspect at fullback and linebacker. Lack of overall depth is another problem. JSU had only five seniors on its two-deep chart after spring practice. That could mean a leadership void.

Outlook: The Gamecocks are excited about switching from a

form of the wishbone to the I-formation. A tough schedule

awaits JSU, which joins the Southland in 1997.

Schedule: West Georgia, Sept. 7; at Nicholls State, Sept. 14; at Ala.-Birmingham, Sept. 21; at SW Missouri State, Sept. 28; Middle Tennessee State, Oct. 5; Western Kentucky, Oct. 12; Samford, Oct. 19; Troy State, Oct. 26; at Stephen F. Austin, Nov. 9; at NE Louisiana, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Gamecocks. **Site:** Jacksonville, Ala.

8. ST. MARY'S

Coach: Mike Rasmussen (39-20-1, 6 years).

1995 record: 8-2.

Top players: Tom Antongiovanni, K/P; Mickey Clements, TE; Ricky Ellis, WR; Tim Hoyt, LB; Josh Kroeze, DL; Sean Laird, QB; Tavita Talavou, DL; Blake Tuffli, WR; David Walker, OL; Ed Williams, RB.

Strengths: The offense, led by Laird, Tuffli and Ellis, will be potent. Thanks to Antongiovanni, the special teams rank among the best in I-AA. Walker is a superb blocker.

Weaknesses: There are few veterans on defense, especially on the line and at linebacker. The Gaels must find ways to trim their points and yards allowed. A good secondary will help.

Outlook: A tough schedule will test St. Mary's, which has struggled for respect despite posting nine consecutive winning seasons. If second-year defensive coordinator Jeff Brown can plug some holes, Laird might have enough weapons for the Gaels to surprise.

Schedule: Boston University, Sept. 7; at Idaho, Sept. 14; at Sonoma State, Sept. 21; Drake, Sept. 28; San Diego, Oct. 5; at Cal Poly SLO, Oct. 12; at UC Davis, Oct. 26; at Southern Utah, Nov. 2; Chapman, Nov. 9; Humboldt State, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Gaels. **Site:** Moraga, Calif.

9. WESTERN KENTUCKY

Coach: Jack Harbaugh (30-44, 7 years; 55-71-3 overall, 12 years).

1995 record: 2-8.

Top players: Antwan Floyd, TB; Turner Goodwin, OT; Kenny Martray, DT; Carlis Phillips, CB; Latravis Powell, FB; Joey Stockton, WR; Willie Taggart, QB; Delvechio Walls, CB; Bryson Warner, LB; Sidney Williams, WR.

Strengths: Stockton, fifth in I-AA last year in all-purpose running, is a big-time weapon. Floyd should break the school rushing record. Twelve of the top 13 players in total offense return.

Weaknesses: Three of the team's top five tacklers are gone. Inexperience is a major concern, as roughly half the roster has never played in college.

Outlook: The Hilltoppers must get more consistent on defense. Last year's true freshman class gets a chance to contribute, but don't look for a winning season for at least another year.

Schedule: Kentucky Wesleyan, Aug. 29; at Murray State, Sept. 7; Eastern Kentucky, Sept. 14; at Austin Peay, Sept. 21; at Marshall, Sept. 28; at Ala.-Birmingham, Oct. 5; at Jacksonville State, Oct. 12; Liberty, Oct. 19; Indiana State, Oct. 26; Southern Illinois, Nov. 2; at Morehead State, Nov. 9.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: 1988.

Nickname: Hilltoppers. **Site:** Bowling Green, Ky.

10. TOWSON STATE

Coach: Gordy Combs (27-13, 4 years).

1995 record: 6-4.

Top players: John Bardak, DE; Jim Colongo, MLB; Amadi Eze, WR; Brad Friedman, CB; Jason Maier, G; Khalid McLeod, FS; George Perdikakis, K; Kevin Smith, QB; Steve Szymanski, OT; Shawn Ward, WR.

Strengths: The Tigers return 14 starters, including eight on offense. Moving Szymanski, the team's best player, from tight end could pay huge dividends. The secondary is athletic.

Weaknesses: There is no clear-cut starter at tailback. Ten starters are either freshmen or sophomores.

Outlook: The Tigers, who will join the Patriot League as an associate member next year, had 18 first-time starters last season. By the time Towson settles into the Patriot, it will be one of the dominant teams.

Schedule: at Butler, Sept. 7; at Bucknell, Sept. 14; at Robert Morris, Sept. 21; Dayton, Sept. 28; Central Connecticut, Oct. 5; Colgate, Oct. 12; at Monmouth, Oct. 19; St. Francis (Pa.), Oct. 26; at Marist, Nov. 2; Wagner, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Tigers. **Site:** Towson, Md.

11. MONMOUTH

Coach: Kevin Callahan (16-10, 3 years).

1995 record: 7-3.

Top players: Anthony Berke, LB; Dominic Cuniglio, OT; Justin Garbolino, TE; William Holder, WR; Michael James, DB; Joe Little, LB; Ralph O'Neil, RB, Sr.; Dan Sabella, QB; Vinnie Sasso, FS; Nick Szymanski, DE.

Strengths: Of the 21 returning starters, 12 are four-year starters for a program that began in 1993. Sabella had the second-best efficiency rating among I-AA sophomore quarterbacks last season.

Weaknesses: Not many for a non-scholarship program. The Hawks were flagged often in 1995 and their special teams were bad. In addition, both lines lack size.

Outlook: Monmouth is the best of the five teams—the others are Robert Morris, Wagner, St. Francis and Central Connecticut State—in the fledgling football wing of the Northeast Conference. Two of its three losses last year were by one point.

Schedule: Southern Conn., Sept. 7; St. Francis (Pa.), Sept. 14; Pace, Sept. 21; at C.W. Post, Sept. 28; at Mercyhurst, Oct. 5; at Wagner, Oct. 12; Towson State, Oct. 19; at Robert Morris, Oct. 26; Siena, Nov. 9; Central Conn., Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Hawks. **Site:** West Long Branch, N.J.

12. ROBERT MORRIS

Coach: Joe Walton (13-5-1, 2 years).

1995 record: 6-4.

Top players: Ralph Clark, RB; Brian Dunn, FS.; Robert Frazier, TE; Jason Henley, DE; Nate List, LB; Fred Manalac, LB; Jake Newman, QB; Dante Payne, CB; DeLonte Perkins, WR; Jason Spencer, DE.

Strengths: The Colonials return all but one starter for their first year in the Northeast Conference. Everybody's back from a defense that has forced 65 turnovers over the past two years. Newman and Frazier are a solid pass-catch duo.

Weaknesses: The offensive line returns five starters but still needs work. No one can replace fullback Tim Hall, who gained 85 percent of the team's rushing yards over the past two years and was picked in the sixth round of the NFL draft by Oakland.

Outlook: Barring another injury-plagued season, Robert Morris will be competitive, but it takes time to recover from the loss of player like Hall.

Schedule: at Mercyhurst, Sept. 7; Butler, Sept. 14; Towson State, Sept. 21; at Central Connecticut State, Sept. 28; Gannon, Oct. 5; at Dayton, Oct. 12; Monmouth, Oct. 26; at Wagner, Nov. 2; at St. Francis (Pa.), Nov. 9; C.W. Post, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Colonials. **Site:** Coraopolis, Pa.

13. WAGNER

Coach: Walt Hameline (118-39-2, 15 years).

1995 record: 8-2.

Top players: Justin Abel, LB; Anthony Abruzzese, SS; Carl Franke, K/P; Sean Hurley, WR; Ryan Linder, LB; Randy Marciano, C; Jason Miletic, QB; Ricardo Sarille, RB; Jason Scholz, FS; Bill Sommers, DE.

Strengths: Miletic, who began his career at Cincinnati, is one of the best quarterbacks in non-scholarship football. Sommers led the team with 10 sacks and found a home at end last season. The Seahawks had spring practice for the first time ever this year.

Weaknesses: The special teams, mediocre a year ago, need work. Depth is always a problem in non-scholarship football.

Outlook: Last season, Wagner ranked third in I-AA in rushing defense and fourth in total defense. The Seahawks have a chance to maintain their tradition in the Northeast Conference this year if Sommers continues to shine.

Schedule: at Iona, Sept. 14; C.W. Post, Sept. 21; Marist, Sept. 28; at St. Francis (Pa.), Oct. 5; Monmouth, Oct. 12; St. Peter's, Oct. 19; at Central Connecticut, Oct. 26; Robert Morris, Nov. 2; at Stony Brook, Nov. 9; at Towson State, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Seahawks. **Site:** Staten Island, N.Y.

14. SOUTHERN UTAH

Coach: Rich Ellerson (first year).

1995 record: 2-9.

Top players: Joe Dupaix, QB; Tom Fell, C; Jeff Galyean, DE; Chris Garza, LB; Mike Johnson, CB/S; Austin Lindsey, QB; Brook Madsen, FB; David McCovy, RB/WR; Garrett Moon, DT;

Ruben Togisala, DT.

Strengths: Galyean is the team's best player. The new spread offense might help open things up. The defensive line has prospects who must learn the (Desert Swarm) flex, which Ellerson developed while at Arizona.

Weaknesses: The secondary is porous, the offensive line is troublesome and the linebackers are inexperienced. The new staff moved players around in the spring, searching for answers.

Outlook: Few, if any, winnable games are on the schedule. The roster was hit hard by graduation and the defection of players who left when Ellerson replaced longtime coach Jack Bishop. So many changes at one time are traumatic for a struggling team, but may eventually pay dividends.

Schedule: Northern Iowa, Aug. 31; at Weber State, Sept. 7; at Northern Arizona, Sept. 14; Western State, Sept. 21; Montana Tech, Sept. 28; at Montana, Oct. 5; SW Texas State, Oct. 12; at Cal Poly SLO, Oct. 19; at New Mexico State, Oct. 26; Saint Mary's, Nov. 2; at UC Davis, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Thunderbirds. **Site:** Cedar City, Utah.

15. CENTRAL CONN.

Coach: Sal Cintorino (12-27, 4 years).

1995 record: 2-8.

Top players: L.T. Brown, TE; Ryan Carrigan, S; Brian Clements, OLB; Charlie Eger, K/P; Michael Graham, G; Brian Harney, OT; Stan House, TB; Steve Konopka, DT; Dominick Pellegrino, ILB; Ed Zaskey, ILB.

Strengths: Nineteen starters are back, fueling optimism after a rough 1995. House is a talented runner and receiver who will make his mark in the Northeast Conference.

Weaknesses: The Blue Devils are among the worst of the non-scholarship programs in I-AA. Depth, especially on both lines, is thin. The quarterbacking is bad. There's not much to like.

Outlook: Cintorino is making progress, but with no scholarships, growth is difficult. The program has had one winning season in the past 18 years. It's soon to be one in 19.

Schedule: at Albany, Sept. 7; at Fairfield, Sept. 14; at Frostburg State, Sept. 21; Robert Morris, Sept. 28; at Towson State, Oct. 5; Stony Brook, Oct. 12; Wagner, Oct. 26; St. Francis (Pa.), Nov. 2; at Southern Conn., Nov. 9; Monmouth, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Blue Devils. **Site:** New Britain, Conn.

16. ST. FRANCIS

Coach: Pete Mayock (0-10, 1 year).

1995 record: 0-10.

Top players: Matt Farabaugh, LB; Gregg Gergely, DE; Jason Gschwend, DT; Mike Manning, C; Matt Marciak, OT; Patrick McKenna, DB; Joe Ranft, QB; Bryan Ray, RB; Matt Shontofski, K; Jeff Sotosky, RB; Dom Taddei, FS.

Strengths: Seventeen starters return, including Shontofski. Manning and Marciak will provide leadership as the team begins play in the Northeast Conference.

Weaknesses: The Flash hasn't won a road game since 1993. Six returning starters are sophomores. Opponents doubled St. Francis in total offense and third-down conversions last year.

Outlook: The Flash brings a 12-game losing streak into 1996. There's little to suggest the streak will end soon.

Schedule: Waynesburg, Sept. 7; at Monmouth, Sept. 14; at Gannon, Sept. 21; Wagner, Oct. 5; Duquesne, Oct. 12; Mercyhurst, Oct. 19; at Towson State, Oct. 26; at Central Connecticut, Nov. 2; Robert Morris, Nov. 9; Bethany (W.Va.), Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Red Flash. **Site:** Loretto, Pa.

17. WOFFORD

Coach: Mike Ayers (51-37-1, 8 years; 62-58-2 overall, 11 years).

1995 record: 4-7.

Top players: Torez Ammons, DT; Tom Boeing, OT; Eric Daniell, FS; Lomar Foster, RB; Michael Frazier, ILB; Paul Humphries, CB; Brian Nash, G; Brad Smothers, QB; Eric Stephens, SE; Dan Williams, C.

Strengths: Humphries, back from an opening-day season-ending injury, leads a solid secondary. Three sophomores on the offensive line should be better thanks to starting in '95. The Terriers ended the season on a roll and have great facilities.

Weaknesses: The special teams need steady performers, the offense is turnover-prone and there's not much depth in key areas, especially at receiver and linebacker.

Outlook: Wofford ranked in the nation's top 50 in only two of 12 statistical categories last season. After what looks like a 5-6 season at best, the Terriers will become the whipping boy of

the Southern Conference in 1997.

Schedule: at Youngstown State, Aug. 29; Lenoir-Rhyne, Sept. 7; at Western Carolina, Sept. 14; at Furman, Sept. 21; Presbyterian, Oct. 5; Morehead State, Oct. 12; at Newberry, Oct. 19; at Samford, Nov. 2; at Dayton, Nov. 9; Charleston Southern, Nov. 16; at The Citadel, Nov. 23.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Terriers. **Site:** Spartanburg, S.C.

18. CHARLESTON SOUTHERN

Coach: David Dowd (10-43, 5 years).

1995 record: 1-10.

Top players: John Breeden, OT; Reggie Carr, DL; Gary Hamby, ILB; Andre Key, ILB; Quentin Lee, OLB; Terrill Mitchell, WR; Greg Pinckney, RB; Shannon Rice, WR; Heath Siemon, WR; Bruce Smith, C.

Strengths: Nine starting linemen return. Mitchell and Siemon can get open deep. The kickoff return team, which gets a lot of practice, is solid.

Weaknesses: The running game averaged 1.5 yards per rush last year; opponents averaged 5.1. Charleston Southern is pinning its hopes of narrowing that gap on two true freshmen running backs. The quarterback won't be decided until the fall.

Outlook: The Buccaneers, who give just 25 scholarships, are 1-21 the past two seasons. An easier schedule in 1996 means three or four wins are possible.

Schedule: South Carolina State, Sept. 7; at Presbyterian, Sept. 14; West Virginia State, Sept. 21; Hofstra, Sept. 28; Morehead State, Oct. 5; Newberry, Oct. 12; at Liberty, Oct. 26; New Haven, Nov. 2; Tusculum, Nov. 9; at Wofford, Nov. 16; at Alabama-Birmingham, Nov. 21.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Buccaneers. **Site:** Charleston, S.C.

19. MOREHEAD STATE

Coach: Matt Ballard (2-19, 2 years; 37-44-1 overall, 8 years).

1995 record: 2-8. OVC: 1-7/78th.

Top players: Mike Appel, OT; Chris Berry, RB/QB; David Bone, RB; Adam Conn, OT; Tyrone Davis, WR; Cliff Freeman, DB; Carl Mack, DB; Scott Marsh, ILB; Mackenzie McKnight, DT; Anthony Ravizee, FB; Dean Topping, OLB.

Strengths: An optimistic coach and more scheduling freedom as an independent rank at the top of this list. The Eagles' 34-22 loss last year to Charleston Southern sums up the situation.

Weaknesses: How high can you count? MSU will rely mainly upon walk-ons this year. This team has a game face only a mother could love.

Outlook: Grim. The Eagles, who left the Ohio Valley Conference after last season, continue their move toward awarding only need-based scholarships in a de-emphasis of football mandated by the school's administration.

Schedule: at Dayton, Sept. 7; at Valparaiso, Sept. 21; Kentucky Wesleyan, Sept. 28; at Charleston Southern, Oct. 5; at Wofford, Oct. 12; St. Joseph's, Oct. 26; Quincy, Nov. 2; Western Kentucky, Nov. 9; at Evansville, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Eagles. **Site:** Morehead, Ky.

20. DAVIDSON

Coach: Tim Landis (10-19-1, 3 years).

1995 record: 1-8-1.

Top players: John Cowan, OT/DE; Tommy Dugan, QB/WR; Kevin Graham, CB; Cliff Henry, QB; Wes Jones, TE; Mike Lassiter, G; Loranzo Moll, TB; Kirk Roberts, SE; Chip Stewart, C; Wes Thornton, LB.

Strengths: There are 15 returning starters, including eight on offense. The passing game returns intact, and there's better depth. Some of the newcomers are more athletic than in years past.

Weaknesses: Two of Davidson's best-ever defensive linemen have graduated. A number of position changes on each side of the ball might pay off but are hardly a sign of stability.

Outlook: The Wildcats still don't play a I-AA opponent—and with good reason. The worst of the non-scholarship I-AA programs wouldn't fare well against most of the other independents.

Schedule: at Maryville, Sept. 14; at University of the South, Sept. 21; Emory & Henry, Sept. 28; Guilford, Oct. 5; Washington & Lee, Oct. 12; at Methodist, Oct. 19; Randolph-Macon, Oct. 26; at Hampton-Sydney, Nov. 2; Centre, Nov. 9; at Bridgewater, Nov. 16.

Last I-AA playoff appearance: None.

Nickname: Wildcats. **Site:** Davidson, N.C.

Text by Carl Dubois.

SCOUTING DIVISION II

By JERRY FELTS

When North Alabama coach Bobby Wallace looks at his 1996 Lions, he sees a team reminiscent of the one that began the school's unprecedented reign atop Division II in 1993.

North Alabama capped off last season with a 27-7 victory over Pittsburg State to claim its third consecutive Division II championship, becoming the first school to win the title three years in a row. Despite the loss of 19 seniors—including linebacker Ronald McKinnon, who won the Harlon Hill Trophy as the division's best player—the Lions expect to challenge for a fourth title with 38 lettermen and some key newcomers.

"People say we can't be as good as last year, and we can't," Wallace says. "That was perhaps the all-time greatest team to play in Division II. They won by an average of 25 points."

"This team will be more like the '93 team, where we'll be a little inexperienced at the first of the year. If we can win some close games and gain some momentum and get headed in the right direction, we have a chance to do anything we want."

North Alabama's September 21 game at Texas A&M-Kingsville will be a rematch of the 1994 Division II championship game, which the Lions won, 16-10.

NOTES: North Alabama is 41-1 during its three-year championship run, the lone blemish a three-point road loss at Division I-AA Youngstown State in 1994. The Lions have not lost to a Division II foe since November 28, 1992 (41 consecutive victories since a quarterfinal playoff loss to Jacksonville State), and their current 23-game win streak is second only to Nebraska's 25 in a row among NCAA schools. UNA's 12-game postseason win streak is a Division II record. ... Last season, Pittsburg State became the first Division II school to qualify for the playoffs in seven consecutive seasons. Its victory over Texas A&M-Kingsville in the '95 national semifinals was the 506th win in school history, moving the Gorillas past Hillsdale (Mich.) as Division II's all-time winningest team. North Dakota State is third with 500 wins. ... Speaking of North Dakota State, Bison coach Rocky Hager must decide between veteran Rob Hyland or sophomore Kevin Feeney as his starting

TOP 5 GAMES TO WATCH:

1. North Alabama at Texas A&M-Kingsville, September 21
2. Texas A&M-Kingsville at North Dakota State, September 7
3. New Haven at Indiana, Pa., September 28
4. Edinboro, Pa., at Carson-Newman (Tenn.), September 14
5. Truman State at Pittsburg State, October 5

quarterback in 1996. After Hyland—a preseason All-American candidate—suffered a season-ending knee injury in the first game last year, Feeney stepped in and accounted for 1,549 total yards and 21 touchdowns. ... Truman State's Jarrett Anderson, perhaps the top preseason contender for the Harlon Hill Award, needs 1,122 yards to move past former Wofford star Shawn Graves and into third place on the Division II career rushing list. Anderson has 4,006 yards. It's unlikely he'll catch either former New Haven (Conn.) star Roger Graham (5,953 yards) or Texas A&I's Johnny Bailey (6,320). ... Carson-Newman (Tenn.) has won 11 of the past 14 South Atlantic Conference championships and is 39-3 (93 percent) against SAC opponents during the 1990s. ... Ferris State (Mich.) owns a 39-game regular-season unbeaten streak (37-0-2 since '92) that includes 24 consecutive victories in the Midwest Intercollegiate Football Conference. ... Cal-Davis has posted 26 consecutive winning seasons, the longest streak in Division II. ... Northeast Missouri State officially changed its name to Truman State on July 1. ... Texas A&M-Kingsville hasn't lost a Lone Star Conference matchup in four years and has won three consecutive Division II West Region championships. ... The Gulf South Conference has produced six of the past nine Division II champions, including the past four. ... Newcomer Nebraska-Kearney is expected to challenge Fort Hays State (Kan.) and Western State (Colo.) for supremacy in the Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference. The Antelopes host both Fort Hays State and Western State in their inaugural RMAC campaign. ♦

Jerry Felts covers college football for the Florence (Ala.) TimesDaily.

DIVISION II TOP 10

PREDICTIONS

1. NORTH ALABAMA

The three-time defending champions have 38 returning lettermen but face a difficult non-conference schedule.

2. PITTSBURG (Kan.) STATE

Twelve starters return as the Gorillas seek their fourth trip to the title game during the '90's.

3. TEXAS A&M-KINGSVILLE

The Javelinas return seven defensive starters from an 11-2 squad, but the offensive line must be rebuilt.

4. NEW HAVEN (Conn.)

The Chargers have high expectations, thanks to the return of 15 starters from a 10-1-1 playoff team.

5. NORTH DAKOTA

All-American DL Mark Callahan and 16 other starters give the Sioux a wealth of returning talent.

6. NORTH DAKOTA STATE

Experience and talent should make the Bison a marked team once again in 1996.

7. MILLERSVILLE (Pa.)

With 16 returning starters, the Marauders hope to duplicate last year's unbeaten regular season.

8. VALDOSTA (Ga.) STATE

The Blazers expect to return to national prominence behind a high-powered offense led by QB Lance Funderburk.

9. VIRGINIA STATE

The defending CIAA champion Trojans return most of their key players from an 8-2 squad.

10. FERRIS STATE (Mich.)

The Bulldogs have some notable holes to fill, but defense should be their strength.

1995 PLAYOFFS

FIRST ROUND

Ferris State 63, Millersville 16
New Haven 27, Edinboro 12
North Alabama 38, Albany St. 28
Carson-Newman 37, West Georgia 26
Pittsburg St. 36, Northern Colorado 17
North Dakota St. 41, North Dakota 10
Texas A&M-Kingsville 59, Fort Hays St. 28
Portland St. 56, East Texas St. 35

QUARTERFINALS

Ferris St. 17, New Haven 9
North Alabama 28, Carson-Newman 7
Pittsburg St. 9, North Dakota St. 7
Texas A&M-Kingsville 30, Portland St. 3

SEMIFINALS

North Alabama 45, Ferris St. 7
Pittsburg St. 28, Texas A&M-Kingsville 25 OT

FINAL

North Alabama 27, Pittsburg St. 7

PRESEASON DIVISION II ALL-AMERICAN TEAM

OFFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
WR	CARLOS FERRALLS, Glenville (W.Va.) St.	6-4/175	Jr.
WR	SEAN PENDER, Valdosta (Ga.) State	5-8/165	Sr.
TE	BEN KERN, Western State (Colo.)	6-2/228	Jr.
T	BOB GOLTRA, Pittsburg (Kan.) State	6-7/296	Sr.
T	TONY RAMIREZ, Northern Colorado	6-6/295	Sr.
G	DAN MACIEJCZAK, Chadron (Neb.) St.	6-2/290	Sr.
G	JEREMY O'DAY, Edinboro (Pa.)	6-3/285	Sr.
C	DON STRUBING, Central Arkansas	6-2/305	Sr.
QB	LANCE FUNDERBURK, Valdosta (Ga.) St.	6-5/218	Sr.
RB	JARRETT ANDERSON, Truman St. (Mo.)	5-7/195	Sr.
RB	RANDY MARTIN, St. Cloud (Minn.) St.	5-9/195	Sr.

DEFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
DL	MARK CALLAHAN, North Dakota	6-2/290	Sr.
DL	RICHARD JORDAN, Missouri Southern	6-2/268	Sr.
DL	REGINALD RUFFIN, North Alabama	5-10/230	Jr.
LB	JOVAN DEWITT, Northern Michigan	6-3/241	Sr.
LB	SEAN FREDRICKS, North Dakota State	6-2/247	Jr.
LB	JAMES GRANT, North Carolina Central	5-11/245	Sr.
LB	MIKE SIMS, Edinboro (Pa.)	6-2/225	Sr.
DB	KEITH ECK, Fort Hays State (Kan.)	6-4/180	Sr.
DB	KEVIN MATHIS, East Texas State	5-9/175	Sr.
DB	TELLY PRIESTER, Virginia State	5-9/160	Jr.
DB	GERALD SMITH, North Alabama	5-7/160	Sr.

SPECIALISTS

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
K	CRAIG MOSES, Henderson (Ark.) St.	5-11/160	Sr.
P	BRIAN MOORMAN, Pittsburg (Kan.) St.	6-1/160	Soph.
KR	CHARLES DAVIS, Saginaw Valley (Mich.) St.	6-2/190	Sr.

PLAYERS OF THE YEAR

OFFENSE:

JARRETT ANDERSON, RB, Truman State (Mo.)

DEFENSE:

MARK CALLAHAN, L, North Dakota

SCOUTING DIVISION III

BY JERRY FELTS

Mount Union enters the 1996 season with a resume no team can match: college football's best winning percentage in the '90s.

The Purple Raiders' 66-6-1 record (91.1 winning percentage) during this decade includes four consecutive Ohio Athletic Conference championships, three trips to the Division III semifinals in the past four years and victories in 39 of their past 40 regular-season contests.

With 47 lettermen—including 16 starters—returning from a team that went 12-1 and lost to eventual champion Wisconsin-La Crosse in the national semifinals, Mount Union appears loaded in its quest to win its second championship in four years.

"The majority of our returning players have been together for the past two seasons," Mount Union coach Larry Kehres says.

"They've shown steady improvement and have established themselves as quality players."

The Purple Raiders return nine starters from the top-ranked offense in Division III last year (495.8 yards per game).

NOTES: Central (Iowa) College tailback Mark Kacmarynski, a 1994 Gagliardi Award finalist, returns for another season after being granted a medical hardship year by the NCAA. Kacmarynski suffered a fractured tibia and fibula in his leg in the third game of the 1995 season. He has rushed for 4,252 yards and 48 touchdowns during his career. ... Mount Union quarterbacks have thrown at least one touchdown pass in 59 consecutive games. ... Allegheny College's Ken O'Keefe is the most successful active coach in college football. His six-year record of 60-7-1 (.890 winning percentage) includes four trips to the playoffs and the 1990 national championship. The Gators have averaged 40.4 points per game with O'Keefe on the sidelines. ... Mike Swider replaces 14-year veteran J.R. Bishop as coach at Wheaton (Ill.) College. Bishop posted an 84-43-1 record and remains as the Crusaders' associate head coach and offensive coordinator. ... After scoring in a Division III-record 224 consecutive games, Carnegie Mellon had

TOP 5 GAMES TO WATCH:

1. Washington & Jefferson at Buffalo State, September 21
2. Wisconsin-La Crosse at Wisconsin-Stevens Point, October 19
3. Mount Union at John Carroll, October 19
4. Allegheny at Wittenberg, September 21
5. Thomas More at Albion, November 16

the streak snapped in its final game last season, a 3-0 loss to Case Western Reserve. ... Two running backs who started as freshmen for Delaware Valley in 1993—Chad Breidinger and Brad Lower—now play at Middle Atlantic Conference rival Moravian (Pa.). When the teams played last season, Breidinger and Lower combined for 189 yards rushing in a 32-0 Moravian win. ... Wisconsin-Whitewater offensive tackle Derrick Levake, a former U.S. Army Ranger, was a Division III All-American wrestler in his first season of competition. Listed at 6-5 and 250 pounds in football, Levake wrestled as a heavyweight. ... Brian Polian, son of Carolina Panthers' G.M. Bill Polian, is an inside linebacker at John Carroll University. Brian's older brother, Chris, was a wide receiver for the Blue Streaks from 1989-92. ... Susquehanna (Pa.) wide receiver Kamief Jenkins was a Division III All-American in track in 1994 and a top reserve for the Crusaders' basketball squad during the 1995-96 season. The three-sport standout caught 40 passes for 609 yards and 11 touchdowns in '95. ... Albion (Mich.) is seeking its record eighth consecutive Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association title this year. ... Alfred (N.Y.) enters its first season as a Presidents' Athletic Conference member in 1996. The Saxons are expected to challenge Washington & Jefferson for the PAC title. ... Legendary St. John's (Minn.) coach John Gagliardi has not had a losing season since 1967, when the Johnnies went 3-5.

Jerry Felts covers college football for the Florence (Ala.) TimesDaily.

DIVISION III TOP 10

PREDICTIONS

1. MOUNT UNION (OHIO)

All-American QB Bill Borchert and 15 other returning starters make the Purple Raiders the Division III favorite.

2. WISCONSIN-LA CROSSE

Eight defensive starters return to lead the Eagles' bid for a second consecutive national title.

3. ROWAN (N.J.)

Coach K.C. Keeler's Professors have 12 returning starters from last year's Division III runner-up.

4. WASHINGTON & JEFFERSON (PA.)

The Presidents are inexperienced across the offensive front but have plenty of talent at every other position.

5. ST. JOHN'S (MINN.)

QB Kurt Ramler and T Jesse Redepinning lead an offensive unit that averaged 38.5 ppg in '95.

6. ALBION (MICH.)

A bevy of returnees on both sides of the ball makes the '94 Division III champs a top contender for another title.

7. BUFFALO (N.Y.) STATE

The Bengals return nearly all of their skill-position players from last year's record-setting offense.

8. ALLEGHENY (PA.)

The Gators boast 16 returning starters, including the conference rushing and receiving champions.

9. WISCONSIN-STEVENS POINT

With 17 returning starters, the Pointers could unseat UW-La Crosse as conference's best team.

10. LYCOMING (PA.)

The Warriors have 19 starters returning from last year's 8-3 playoff team.

1995 PLAYOFFS

FIRST ROUND

Mount Union 52, Hanover 18
Wheaton 63, Wittenburg 41
Wisconsin-La Crosse 45, Concordia-Moorhead 7
Wisconsin-River Falls 10, Central (Iowa) 7
Washington & Jefferson 35, Emory and Henry 16
Lycoming 31, Widener 27
Rowan 46, Buffalo St. 7
Union 24, Plymouth St. 7

QUARTERFINALS

Mount Union 40, Wheaton 14
Wisconsin-La Crosse 28, Wisconsin-River Falls 14
Washington & Jefferson 48, Lycoming 0
Rowan 38, Union 7

SEMIFINALS

Wisconsin-La Crosse 20, Mount Union 17
Rowan 28, Washington & Jefferson 15

FINAL

Wisconsin-La Crosse 36, Rowan 7

PRESEASON DIVISION III ALL-AMERICAN TEAM

OFFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
WR	MIKE GUNDERSDORF, Wilkes (Pa.)	6-3/182	Sr.
WR	KURT BARTH, Eureka (Ill.)	5-11/205	Jr.
TE	MIKE METEYARD, Beloit (Wis.)	6-1/185	Sr.
L	TODD ALCOCK, Adrian (Mich.)	6-6/300	Sr.
L	MICHAEL DOWNEY, Lycoming (Pa.)	6-1/278	Sr.
L	ERIK HALVERSON, Wis.-La Crosse	6-2/300	Sr.
L	BRETT MOSES, Thomas More (Ky.)	6-4/280	Sr.
L	JESSE REDEPINNING, St. John's (Minn.)	6-5/270	Sr.
QB	BILL BORCHERT, Mount Union (Ohio)	6-2/190	Jr.
RB	BRAD OLSON, Lawrence (Wis.)	6-1/205	Jr.
RB	RICK ETIENNE, Franklin (Ind.)	5-10/185	Jr.

DEFENSE

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
DL	SCOTT O'DONNELL, John Carroll (Ohio)	6-0/225	Sr.
DL	DAN PRIMROSE, Wash. & Jeff. (Pa.)	6-2/273	Sr.
DL	NICK REISER, Allegheny (Pa.)	6-2/225	Sr.
DL	DEMETRIUS STEVENSON, Wesley (Del.)	6-1/292	Sr.
LB	CHRIS ANDERSON, John Carroll (Ohio)	6-0/220	Sr.
LB	MATT BIXLER, Dickinson (Pa.)	6-3/214	Sr.
LB	CHIP PARRISH, Wheaton (Ill.)	6-3/230	Sr.
DB	HEATH ALLARD, Cornell (Iowa)	6-3/190	Sr.
DB	DAVID LEFERE, Albion (Mich.)	6-0/170	Sr.
DB	CHRIS NALLEY, Washington (Mo.)	5-11/154	Sr.
DB	KEN POPE, Wittenberg (Ohio)	5-9/150	Soph.

SPECIALISTS

Pos.	Name, School	Ht./Wt.	Class
K	ROGER EGBERT, Union (N.Y.)	5-9/170	Sr.
P	JEFF SHEA, Cal Lutheran	6-2/195	Jr.
KR	JIM WALLACE, Ripon (Wis.)	6-2/195	Sr.

PLAYERS OF THE YEAR

OFFENSE:

BILL BORCHERT, QB, Mount Union

DEFENSE:

CHRIS ANDERSON, LB, John Carroll

TEAM	AUG. 31	SEPT. 7	SEPT. 14	SEPT. 21	SEPT. 28	OCT. 5	OCT. 12	OCT. 19	OCT. 26	NOV. 2	NOV. 9	NOV. 16	NOV. 23
AIR FORCE	San Jose State	at UNLV		at Wyoming	Pace	at San Diego State	Navy	at Notre Dame	Hawaii	Colorado State	at Army	at Fresno State	
AKRON	Ohio U/Aug. 29	Virginia Tech	Toledo	at Illinois	Western Michigan	at Kent	at Central Michigan	Miami	Northern Illinois	Bowling Green	at E. Michigan		
ALABAMA	Bowling Green	Southern Miss	Vanderbilt	at Arkansas	Kentucky	Kentucky	at N.C. State	Mississippi	at Tennessee		at LSU	at Mississippi St.	Auburn
ALA-BIRMINGHAM	at Auburn	at Maryland	Arkansas State	Jacksonville State	Western Kentucky	Western Kentucky		SW Louisiana	at Louisiana Tech	at Vanderbilt	Central Florida	Cincinnati	Charleston Southern
ARIZONA	UTEP	at Iowa	Illinois	at Washington	Washington State	Washington State	at USC		Oregon State	at California	at Oregon	UCLA	Arizona State
ARIZONA STATE	Washington	SMU	North Texas	Nebraska	Boise State	Boise State	at UCLA	USC	at Stanford	at Oregon State	California	Mississippi	at Arizona
ARKANSAS	at Alabama	at Mississippi	at Little Rock, Ark.	Alabama	Florida	Central Arkansas	Louisiana Tech	at South Carolina	at Mississippi	at Auburn	Mississippi	at Tennessee	at Mississippi State
ARKANSAS STATE	at BYU	at UAB	at UAB	at Little Rock, Ark.	Central Arkansas	Central Arkansas	at SW Louisiana	SE Missouri	at Mississippi	at East Carolina	Louisiana Tech	at Nevada	LSU Nov. 30 (at Little Rock)
ARMY		Ohio	Ohio	Duke	Yale	Yale	at Rutgers	Tulane	at Miami (Ohio)	Lafayette	Air Force	at Syracuse	Navy (Dec. 7)
AUBURN	UAB	Fresno State	at Mississippi	LSU	South Carolina	South Carolina	at Mississippi St.	at Florida		Arkansas	NE Louisiana	Georgia	Alabama
BALL STATE	at Kansas/Aug. 29	Miami (Ohio)	at Minnesota	Central Florida	at Western Michigan	at Western Michigan	Ohio U.	at Bowling Green	at Central Michigan	at Eastern Michigan	Kent	Toledo	at Oklahoma State
BAYLOR	at Louisiana Tech	at Louisville	at Louisville	Oregon State	at Texas Tech	at Texas Tech	at Nebraska	Oklahoma	Iowa State	at Texas	Texas A&M	Missouri	at New Mexico St.
BOISE STATE	Central Michigan	Portland State	E. Washington	at Hawaii	NW Louisiana	at Arizona State	at Nevada	Utah State	Syracuse	at Pitt/Oct. 31	North Texas	Idaho	at Idaho
BOSTON COLLEGE	at Hawaii	Virginia Tech	at Virginia Tech	at Michigan	Navy	at West Virginia	at Cincinnati	Rutgers	at Ohio U.	at Akron	Notre Dame	Temple	at Miami
BOWLING GREEN	at Alabama	Temple	at Washington	at Miami (Ohio)	Central Michigan	at Toledo	Kent	Ball State	at Ohio U.	at Akron	Western Michigan	at Central Florida	
BYU	at Alabama	at Washington	at Washington	New Mexico	SMU	at Utah St. Oct. 4	UNLV	at Tulsa	at TCU	UTEP	Pace	at Hawaii	at Utah
CALIFORNIA	at San Jose State	San Jose State	San Jose State	Nevada	Oregon State	at USC		at Washington State	UCLA	Arizona	at Arizona State	at Oregon	Stanford
CENTRAL FLORIDA	William & Mary	at South Carolina	at New Mexico	at Ball State	at East Carolina	at USC	Sanford	NE Louisiana	at Georgia Tech	Illinois State	at UAB	Bowling Green	
CENTRAL MICHIGAN	at Boise State	at Virginia	Louisiana Tech	Western Michigan	at Bowling Green	at Miami	Akron	Eastern Michigan	Ball State	at Kent	at Toledo		
CINCINNATI	Tulane/Aug. 30	Kentucky	at Kansas State	at Missouri	Miami (Ohio)	at Memphis	Boston College	Houston	at Louisville	at Southern Miss	at UAB		NE Louisiana
CLEMSON	at North Carolina	Furman	at Kansas State	at Missouri	Wake Forest	at Florida State	at Duke	Georgia Tech	Texas	at Missouri	Iowa State	Kansas State	South Carolina
COLORADO	Washington State	at Colorado State	Michigan	UNLV	at Texas A&M	at Florida State	Oklahoma State	at Kansas	at San Jose State	at Fresno State	at Fresno State	at Wake Forest	at Nebraska Nov. 29
COLORADO STATE	UT Chattanooga	Colorado	at Oregon	at Army	at Georgia Tech	at Navy	at Tulsa	San Jose State	at San Diego State	at Air Force	at N.C. State	at Wake Forest	North Carolina
DUKE	at Florida State	at Florida State	at West Virginia	South Carolina	Central Florida		Clemson	at Miami	at Virginia Tech	at Arkansas State	at Virginia Tech	Ohio	at Memphis
EAST CAROLINA	E. Tennessee St.	at Tennessee St.	at Tennessee St.	at Tennessee St.	at Tennessee St.	at Tennessee St.	at Tennessee St.	at Tennessee St.	at Tennessee St.	at Tennessee St.	at Tennessee St.	at Tennessee St.	N.C. St. Nov. 30 (at Charlotte)
EASTERN MICHIGAN	Temple	at Wisconsin	at Wisconsin	at Wisconsin	at Wisconsin	at Wisconsin	at Wisconsin	at Wisconsin	at Wisconsin	at Wisconsin	at Wisconsin	at Wisconsin	at Wisconsin
FLORIDA	SW Louisiana	Georgia Southern	Georgia Southern	Georgia Southern	Georgia Southern	Georgia Southern	Georgia Southern	Georgia Southern	Georgia Southern	Georgia Southern	Georgia Southern	Georgia Southern	at Florida State Nov. 30
FLORIDA STATE	Duke	Duke	at N.C. St. Sept. 19	at N.C. St. Sept. 19	North Carolina	Clemson	at Miami	at Virginia Tech	at Virginia Tech	at Virginia Tech	at Virginia Tech	at Virginia Tech	at Virginia Tech
FRESNO STATE	Oregon	at Auburn	at Auburn	at Auburn	Hawaii	at Mississippi State	San Jose State	at Wyoming	at UNLV	Boise State	Wake Forest	at Wake Forest	Maryland (at Miami)
GEORGIA	Southern Miss		at South Carolina	Texas Tech		at Mississippi State	Tennessee	Vanderbilt	at Kentucky	Florida	Colorado State	Air Force	Florida Nov. 30
GEORGIA TECH		at N.C. State	Wake Forest	at North Carolina	Duke	Virginia	at Tennessee	at Clemson	Central Florida	Florida State	at Maryland Nov. 14	at Maryland Nov. 14	Mississippi
HAWAII	Boston College	Ohio	at Wyoming	Boise State	at Fresno State	Colorado State	at San Diego State	UNLV	at Air Force		San Jose State	BYU	Wisconsin Nov. 30

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**The
Sporting News**



TEAM	AUG. 31	SEPT. 7	SEPT. 14	SEPT. 21	SEPT. 28	OCT. 5	OCT. 12	OCT. 19	OCT. 26	NOV. 2	NOV. 9	NOV. 16	NOV. 23
HOUSTON	Sam Houston State	at LSU	at Pittsburgh	USC	at SW Texas State	at SW Louisiana	Memphis	at Cincinnati	North Carolina	at Tulane	Southern Miss	Louisville	
IDAHO	at Wyoming	at San Diego State	St. Mary's (Cal.)		at San Diego State	Cal Poly SLO	at Michigan State	Nevada	at Utah State	Eastern Washington	New Mexico State	at North Texas	at Boise State
ILLINOIS	at Michigan	Southern Cal	at Arizona	Akron	Northwestern	Indiana	at Indiana	at Michigan	at Northwestern	Iowa	Ohio State	at Minnesota	Wisconsin
INDIANA		at Toledo	Miami (Ohio)	at Kentucky		at Illinois	at Indiana	at Penn State	Penn State	at Michigan State	at Northwestern	Ohio State	at Purdue
IOWA		at Arizona	Iowa State	at Tulsa	Missouri	Michigan State	Texas A&M	at Oklahoma State	at Baylor	Kansas	at Colorado	Nebraska	at Minnesota
IOWA STATE		Wyoming	at Iowa	at Northern Iowa	at Utah	at Oklahoma	Texas Tech	Colorado	at Nebraska	at Iowa State	Kansas State	Texas	at Missouri
KANSAS	at Texas Tech	at Tennessee	at TCU	at Rice		Nebraska	at Missouri	at Texas A&M	Oklahoma	at Kansas	at Kansas	at Colorado	Iowa State
KANSAS STATE	at Texas Tech	at Tennessee	at TCU	at Rice		Nebraska	at Missouri	at Texas A&M	Oklahoma	at Kansas	at Kansas	at Colorado	Iowa State
KENT	at Miami (Ohio)	at Pittsburgh	Youngstown State		at Nevada	Akron	at Bowling Green	Ohio University	at Eastern Michigan	Central Michigan	at Ball State	at W. Michigan	
KENTUCKY	Louisville	at Cincinnati		Indiana	at Florida	at Alabama	South Carolina	at LSU	Georgia		Mississippi State	Vanderbilt	at Tennessee
LSU		Houston		at Auburn	New Mexico State	Vanderbilt	at Florida	Kentucky	Mississippi State		Alabama	at Mississippi	Tulane
													at Ark. Nov. 30 (at L. Rock)
LOUISIANA TECH	Middle Tennessee	Baylor	at Central Michigan	at Mississippi State	SW Louisiana	at Texas A&M	at Arkansas	Toledo	UAB	at Northern Illinois	at Arkansas State		
LOUISVILLE	at Kentucky	at Penn State	Baylor	at Michigan State	Southern Miss	N.C. State	at Tulane	at Northern Illinois	Cincinnati	Memphis	at North Carolina	at Houston	
MARYLAND	at Northern Illinois	UAB	at Virginia		at W. Va. Sept. 26		at North Carolina	Wake Forest	at Duke	at Clemson	Tennessee	Ga. Tech/Nov. 14	Florida State (at Miami)
MEMPHIS	Miami (Fla.)	Mississippi State	at Missouri	Tulane	Pittsburgh	Cincinnati	at Houston	at Southern Miss	at SW Louisiana	at Louisville	Tennessee	Virginia Tech	East Carolina
MIAMI	at Memphis	The Citadel	at Rutgers/Sept. 12				Florida State	East Carolina	at West Virginia	at Temple			Boston College
													at Syracuse/Nov. 30
MIAMI (OHIO)	Kent	at Ball State	at Indiana	Bowling Green	at Cincinnati	Central Michigan	at Eastern Michigan	at Akron	Army	at Toledo	Ohio		
MICHIGAN	Illinois		at Colorado	Boston College	UCLA	at Northwestern	Illinois	Indiana	at Minnesota	Michigan State	at Purdue	Penn State	at Ohio State
MICHIGAN STATE	Purdue	at Nebraska		Louisville	Eastern Michigan	at Iowa	at Northwestern	at Minnesota	Wisconsin	at Michigan	Indiana	at Penn State	
MINNESOTA		at NE Louisiana	Ball State	Syracuse		at Purdue	at Northwestern	Michigan State	Michigan	at Ohio State	at Wisconsin	Illinois	Iowa
MISSISSIPPI	Idaho State	VMI	Auburn	at Vanderbilt		Tennessee/Oct. 3	at Northwestern	at Alabama	Arkansas State	at Arkansas	at Arkansas	LSU	at Georgia
		(at Jackson, Miss.)				(at Memphis)							Miss. State/Nov. 30
MISSISSIPPI STATE		at Memphis		Louisiana Tech	at South Carolina	Georgia	Auburn		at LSU	NE Louisiana	at Kentucky	Alabama	Arkansas
													at Mississippi/Nov. 30
MISSOURI	at Texas		Memphis	Clemson	at Iowa State	at SMU	Kansas State		Oklahoma State	Colorado	at Nebraska	at Baylor	Kansas
NAVY		at Rutgers		SMU	at Boston College	Duke	at Air Force		at Wake Forest	Notre Dame	Delaware	Tulane	at Ga. Tech
										(Dublin, Ireland)			Army/Dec. 7 (at Phila.)
NEBRASKA		Michigan State		at Arizona State	Colorado State	at Kansas State	Baylor	at Texas Tech	Kansas	at Oklahoma	Missouri	at Iowa State	Colorado/Nov. 29
NEVADA		at Oregon	Montana State	at California	Kent	at UNLV	Boise State	at Idaho	at North Texas	New Mexico State	at Utah State	Arkansas State	
NEW MEXICO	at N. Mex. St./Aug. 29	at Northern Arizona	Central Florida	at BYU	TCU	at Rice	San Diego State	San Diego State	at SMU	at Tulsa	Utah	Arkansas State	UTEP
NEW MEXICO STATE	New Mexico/Aug. 29	at Texas	at UTEP	CS Northridge	at LSU		Utah State	at North Texas	Southern Utah	at Nevada	at Idaho	Boise State	
NORTH CAROLINA	Clemson	at Syracuse	Georgia Tech	Georgia Tech	at Florida State	at Wake Forest	Maryland	at Virginia	at Houston	N.C. State	Louisville	at Virginia	at Duke
N.C. STATE		Georgia Tech	Florida State		at Purdue	at Maryland	Alabama	at Virginia	at Houston	at North Carolina	Duke	at Clemson	Wake Forest
													ECU/Nov. 30 (at Charlotte)
NORTH TEXAS		Illinois State	at Arizona State	at Texas A&M	Army	at Northern Illinois	Vanderbilt	New Mexico State	Nevada	at Utah State	at Boise State	Idaho	
NE LOUISIANA	Nichols St./Aug. 29	Minnesota	at UCLA	Sam Houston State	at Arkansas	NW Louisiana		at Central Florida	at Mississippi State	at Mississippi State	at Auburn	Jacksonville State	at Cincinnati
NORTHERN ILLINOIS	at Maryland	Western Illinois	at Penn State	at Arkansas State	UTEP	North Texas	at Louisville	at Louisville	Akron	Louisiana Tech	at SW Louisiana	at Oregon State	
NORTHWESTERN		at Wake Forest	at Duke	Ohio University	at Indiana	Michigan	Minnesota	at Wisconsin	Illinois	at Penn State	at Iowa	Purdue	

TEAM	AUG. 31	SEPT. 7	SEPT. 14	SEPT. 21	SEPT. 28	OCT. 5	OCT. 12	OCT. 19	OCT. 26	NOV. 2	NOV. 9	NOV. 16	NOV. 23
NOTRE DAME		at Vanderbilt/Sept. 5	Purdue	at Texas	Ohio State		Washington	Air Force		Navy (at Dublin, Ireland)	at Boston College	Pittsburgh	Rutgers at USC/Nov. 30
OHIO STATE		Rice		Pittsburgh	at Notre Dame	Penn State	Wisconsin	at Purdue	at Iowa	Minnesota	at Illinois	at Indiana	Michigan
OHIO U.	Akron/Aug. 29	at Hawaii	at Army	at Northwestern		Eastern Michigan	at Ball State	at Kent	Bowling Green	at Western Michigan	at Miami (Ohio)	at East Carolina	Toledo
OKLAHOMA		TCU	Tulsa	at San Diego State	Tulsa	Kansas	Texas (at Dallas)	at Baylor	at Kansas State	Nebraska	at Oklahoma State	at Texas A&M	Texas Tech
OKLAHOMA STATE	SW Missouri	(at Dallas)		Utah State		at Texas	at Colorado	Iowa State	at Missouri	Texas A&M	Oklahoma		Baylor
OREGON	at Fresno State	Nevada	Colorado State	at Washington St.	at Arizona State	UCLA	at Stanford		Washington		Arizona	California	at Oregon State
OREGON STATE		Montana	at USC	at Baylor	at California		Washington State	Stanford	at Arizona	Arizona State	at Washington	Northern Illinois	Oregon
PENN STATE	USC/Aug. 25	Louisville	Northern Illinois	Temple	at Wisconsin	at Ohio State	Purdue	Iowa	at Indiana	Northwestern		at Michigan	Michigan State
PITTSBURGH	West Virginia	Kent	Houston	at Ohio State	at Miami	Temple	at Syracuse		at Virginia Tech	Boston Coll./Oct. 31		at Notre Dame	Rutgers/Nov. 30
PURDUE	at Michigan State		at Notre Dame	West Virginia	N.C. State	Minnesota	at Penn State	Ohio State		at Wisconsin	Michigan	at Northwestern	Indiana
RICE		at Ohio State	at Tulane	Kansas State	at Air Force	New Mexico	Army	SMU	at UTEP	Utah	at BYU	at TCU	Tulsa
RUTGERS	Villanova	Navy	Miami/Sept. 12	at Virginia Tech		at Syracuse		at Boston College	Temple		West Virginia		at Notre Dame at Pitt/Nov. 30
SAN DIEGO STATE		Idaho	at California	Oklahoma		Air Force	Hawaii	at New Mexico	at Colorado State	San Jose State	Wyoming/Nov. 7	at UNLV	Fresno State
SAN JOSE STATE	at Air Force	California	at Stanford	UTEP	at Washington State	Wyoming	at Fresno State	at Colorado State		San Diego State	at Hawaii	at Washington	UNLV
SOUTH CAROLINA		Central Florida	Georgia	East Carolina	Mississippi State	at Auburn	at Kentucky	Arkansas	at Vanderbilt	Tennessee		at Florida	at Clemson
SOUTHERN CAL	Penn State/Aug. 25	at Illinois	Oregon State	at Houston	California		Arizona	at Arizona State	at Washington State	Washington	at Stanford		at UCLA Notre Dame/Nov. 30
SMU	Tulsa	at Arkansas	Utah	at Navy	at BYU	Missouri		at Rice	New Mexico	at Wyoming	at UTEP		TCU/Nov. 21
SOUTHERN MISS	at Georgia	at Alabama	Utah State	SW Louisiana	at Louisville		at E. Carolina/Oct. 10	Memphis	at Tulane	Cincinnati	at Houston	at Florida State	
SW LOUISIANA	at Florida		Texas A&M	at Southern Miss	at Louisiana Tech	Houston	Arkansas State	at UAB	Memphis	at Virginia Tech	Northern Illinois	at Texas Tech	
STANFORD		Utah	San Jose State	at Wisconsin	Virginia Tech	at Washington	Oregon	at Oregon State	Arizona State	at UCLA	USC	Washington State	at California
SYRACUSE		North Carolina		at Minnesota		Rutgers	Pittsburgh		at Boston College	at West Virginia	at Tulane	Army	at Temple Miami/Nov. 30
TEMPLE	at Eastern Michigan	Washington State	at Bowling Green	Penn State	Mississippi/Oct. 3 (at Memphis)	at Pittsburgh	at Virginia Tech	West Virginia	at Rutgers	Miami		at Boston College	Syracuse
TENNESSEE	UNLV	UCLA		Florida			at Georgia		Alabama	at South Carolina	at Memphis	Arkansas	Kentucky at Vanderbilt/Nov. 30
TEXAS	Missouri	New Mexico State		Notre Dame	at Virginia	Oklahoma State	Oklahoma (at Dallas)		at Colorado	Baylor	at Texas Tech	at Kansas	Texas A&M/Nov. 29
TEXAS A&M	BYU/Aug. 24	at SW Louisiana	Kansas	North Texas	Colorado	Louisiana Tech	at Iowa State	Kansas State	Texas Tech	at Oklahoma State	at Baylor	Oklahoma	at Texas/Nov. 29
TCU		at Oklahoma	New Mexico State	at San Jose State	at New Mexico	Utah	UTEP	at Utah	BYU	UNLV	at Tulsa	Rice	at SMU/Nov. 21
UTEP	at Arizona	Oklahoma State		at Georgia	Utah State	Baylor	at TCU	Nebraska	Rice	at BYU	SMU	Tulsa	at New Mexico
TEXAS TECH	Kansas State (at Dallas)						at Kansas		at Texas A&M		Texas	SW Louisiana	at Oklahoma
TOLEDO		Indiana	at Akron	at E. Michigan	Weber State	Bowling Green		at Louisiana Tech	Western Michigan	Miami (Ohio)	Central Michigan	at Ball State	at Ohio
TULANE	at Cincinnati/Aug. 30		Rice	at Memphis		TCU	Louisville	at Army	Southern Miss	Houston	Syracuse	at Navy	at LSU
TULSA	at SMU		at Oklahoma State	Iowa	at Oklahoma		Colorado State	BYU	at Utah	New Mexico	TCU	at UTEP	at Rice
UCLA		at Tennessee	NE Louisiana	at Michigan	at Michigan	at Oregon	Arizona State	at Washington	at California	Stanford	Washington State	at Arizona	USC
UNLV	at Tennessee	Air Force	Wisconsin	at Colorado State	Wyoming	Nevada	at BYU	at Hawaii	Fresno State	at TCU	Washington State	San Diego State	at San Jose State
UTAH	at Utah State	at Stanford	at SMU	Fresno State	Kansas	at UTEP	TCU		Tulsa	at Rice	at New Mexico		BYU

TEAM	AUG. 31	SEPT. 7	SEPT. 14	SEPT. 21	SEPT. 28	OCT. 5	OCT. 12	OCT. 19	OCT. 26	NOV. 2	NOV. 9	NOV. 16	NOV. 23
UTAH STATE	Utah	CS Northridge	at Southern Miss	at Oklahoma State	at Texas Tech	BYU/Oct. 4	at New Mexico St.	at Boise State	Idaho	North Texas	Nevada		
VANDERBILT		Notre Dame/Sept. 5	at Alabama	Mississippi	Texas	at LSU	at North Texas	at Georgia	South Carolina	UAB	Florida	at Kentucky	Tennessee/Nov. 30
VIRGINIA		Central Michigan	Maryland	at Wake Forest	at Syracuse	at Georgia Tech	N.C. State	at Florida State	at Duke	Clemson	North Carolina	at Miami	at Virginia Tech/Nov. 29
VIRGINIA TECH		at Akron	at Boston College	Rutgers			Temple		Pittsburgh	SW Louisiana	East Carolina		West Virginia
WAKE FOREST	Appalachian State/ Aug. 29	Northwestern	at Georgia Tech	Virginia	at Clemson	North Carolina		at Maryland	Navy		Florida State (at Orlando)	Duke	at N.C. State
WASHINGTON		at Arizona State	BYU	Arizona		Stanford	at Notre Dame	UCLA	at Oregon	at USC	Oregon State	San Jose State	at Washington State
WASHINGTON STATE	at Colorado	at Temple		Oregon	San Jose State	at Arizona	at Oregon State	California	at USC		at UCLA	at Stanford	Washington
WESTERN MICHIGAN	E. Illinois/Aug. 29	at West Virginia	Eastern Michigan	at Central Michigan	at Akron	Ball State	at Wyoming		at Toledo	Ohio U.	at Bowling Green	Kent	
WEST VIRGINIA	at Pittsburgh	Western Michigan	East Carolina	at Purdue	Maryland/Sept. 26	Boston College		at Temple	Miami	Syracuse	at Rutgers		at Virginia Tech
WISCONSIN		Eastern Michigan	at UNLV	Stanford	Penn State		at Ohio State	Northwestern	at Michigan State	Purdue	Minnesota	at Iowa	at Illinois
WYOMING	Idaho	at Iowa State	Hawaii	Air Force	at UNLV	at San Jose State	Western Michigan	Fresno State		SMU	at San Diego St./ Nov. 7	at Colorado St.	at Hawaii/Nov. 30

TV SCHEDULE

ESPN

(all times EST)

Sept. 5	Notre Dame at Vanderbilt, 8 p.m.
Sept. 12	Miami (Fla.) at Rutgers, 8 p.m.
Sept. 19	Florida State at North Carolina State, 8 p.m.
Sept. 26	Maryland at West Virginia, 8 p.m.
Oct. 3	Tennessee vs. Mississippi (at Memphis), 7:30 p.m.
Oct. 31	Boston College at Pittsburgh, 8 p.m.
Nov. 7	Wyoming at San Diego St., 8 p.m.
Nov. 14	Georgia Tech at Maryland, 8 p.m.
Nov. 21	TCU at SMU, 8 p.m.
Nov. 28	To be determined, 8 p.m.

(NOTE: Saturday games will be determined as the season progresses.)

CBS

(times to be determined)

Sept. 7	UCLA at Tennessee
Sept. 21	Florida at Tennessee
Sept. 28	Virginia Tech at Syracuse
Oct. 12	LSU at Florida
	Florida State at Miami
Nov. 9	Notre Dame at Boston College
Nov. 29	Virginia at Virginia Tech
Nov. 30	Miami at Syracuse

(NOTE: CBS will be the national provider for Big East and Southeastern conference games. More games will be determined as the season progresses.)

ABC

(all times EST)

Aug. 31	Illinois at Michigan, 3:30 p.m.
	Clemson at North Carolina, 3:30 p.m.
	Washington State at Colorado, 3:30 p.m.
	Texas Tech vs. Kansas State at Dallas, 3:30 p.m.
Sept. 7	Michigan State at Nebraska, noon
Sept. 14	Michigan at Colorado, 3:30 p.m.
Sept. 21	Notre Dame at Texas, noon
Sept. 28	Colorado at Texas A&M, 3:30 p.m.
	North Carolina at Florida State, 3:30 p.m.
Nov. 2	Nebraska at Oklahoma, noon
Nov. 16	Penn State at Michigan, noon
Nov. 23	Michigan at Ohio State, noon
Nov. 29	Texas A&M at Texas, 11 a.m.
	Colorado at Nebraska, 2:30 p.m.
Nov. 30	Florida at Florida State, noon
	Notre Dame at USC, 8 p.m.
Dec. 7	Big 12 championship game, TBA
	WAC championship game, TBA
	SEC championship game, TBA

(NOTE: More games will be determined as the season progresses.)

AWARD WINNERS

*Junior; **Sophomore. All others seniors.

HEISMAN TROPHY

(Top player/Downtown Athletic Club of New York)

Year—Player, College, Pos.

- 1935—Jay Berwanger, Chicago, HB
- 1936—Larry Kelley, Yale, E
- 1937—Clint Frank, Yale, HB
- 1938—Davey O'Brien, Texas Christian, QB
- 1939—Nile Kinnick, Iowa, HB
- 1940—Tom Harmon, Michigan, HB
- 1941—Bruce Smith, Minnesota, HB
- 1942—Frank Sinkwich, Georgia, HB
- 1943—Angelo Bertelli, Notre Dame, QB
- 1944—Les Horvath, Ohio State, QB
- 1945—Doc Blanchard, Army, FB*
- 1946—Glenn Davis, Army, HB
- 1947—John Lujack, Notre Dame, QB
- 1948—Doak Walker, Southern Methodist, HB*
- 1949—Leon Hart, Notre Dame, E
- 1950—Vic Janowicz, Ohio State, HB*
- 1951—Dick Kazmaier, Princeton, HB
- 1952—Billy Vessels, Oklahoma, HB
- 1953—John Lattner, Notre Dame, HB
- 1954—Alan Ameche, Wisconsin, FB
- 1955—Howard Cassady, Ohio State, HB
- 1956—Paul Hornung, Notre Dame, QB
- 1957—John David Crow, Texas A&M, HB
- 1958—Pete Dawkins, Army, HB
- 1959—Billy Cannon, Louisiana State, HB
- 1960—Joe Bellino, Navy, HB
- 1961—Ernie Davis, Syracuse, HB
- 1962—Terry Baker, Oregon State, QB
- 1963—Roger Staubach, Navy, QB*
- 1964—John Huarte, Notre Dame, QB
- 1965—Mike Garrett, Southern Cal, HB
- 1966—Steve Spurrier, Florida, QB
- 1967—Gary Beban, UCLA, QB
- 1968—O.J. Simpson, Southern Cal, HB
- 1969—Steve Owens, Oklahoma, HB
- 1970—Jim Plunkett, Stanford, QB
- 1971—Pat Sullivan, Auburn, QB
- 1972—Johnny Rodgers, Nebraska, FL
- 1973—John Cappelletti, Penn State, HB
- 1974—Archie Griffin, Ohio State, HB*
- 1975—Archie Griffin, Ohio State, HB
- 1976—Tony Dorsett, Pittsburgh, HB
- 1977—Earl Campbell, Texas, HB
- 1978—Billy Sims, Oklahoma, HB*
- 1979—Charles White, Southern Cal, HB
- 1980—George Rogers, South Carolina, HB
- 1981—Marcus Allen, Southern Cal, HB
- 1982—Herschel Walker, Georgia, HB*
- 1983—Mike Rozier, Nebraska, HB
- 1984—Doug Flutie, Boston College, QB
- 1985—Bo Jackson, Auburn, HB
- 1986—Vinny Testaverde, Miami (Fla.), QB
- 1987—Tim Brown, Notre Dame, FL
- 1988—Barry Sanders, Oklahoma State, HB*
- 1989—Andre Ware, Houston, QB*
- 1990—Ty Detmer, Brigham Young, QB*
- 1991—Desmond Howard, Michigan, WR*
- 1992—Gino Torretta, Miami (Fla.), QB
- 1993—Charlie Ward, Florida State, QB
- 1994—Rashaan Salaam, Colorado, RB*
- 1995—Eddie George, Ohio State, RB

MAXWELL AWARD

(Top player/Maxwell Football Club of Philadelphia)

Year—Player, College, Pos.

- 1937—Clint Frank, Yale, HB
- 1938—Davey O'Brien, Texas Christian, QB
- 1939—Nile Kinnick, Iowa, HB
- 1940—Tom Harmon, Michigan, HB
- 1941—Bill Dudley, Virginia, HB
- 1942—Paul Gornall, Columbia, QB
- 1943—Bob Odell, Pennsylvania, HB
- 1944—Glenn Davis, Army, HB
- 1945—Doc Blanchard, Army, HB*
- 1946—Charley Trippi, Georgia, HB
- 1947—Doak Walker, SMU, HB*
- 1948—Chuck Bednarik, Penn, C
- 1949—Leon Hart, Notre Dame, E
- 1950—Reds Bagnell, Pennsylvania, HB
- 1951—Dick Kazmaier, Princeton, HB
- 1952—John Lattner, Notre Dame, HB
- 1953—John Lattner, Notre Dame, HB

1954—Ron Beagle, Navy, E

- 1955—Howard Cassady, Ohio State, HB
- 1956—Tommy McDonald, Oklahoma, HB
- 1957—Bob Reifersnyder, Navy, T
- 1958—Pete Dawkins, Army, HB
- 1959—Richie Lucas, Penn State, QB
- 1960—Joe Bellino, Navy, HB
- 1961—Bob Ferguson, Ohio State, FB
- 1962—Terry Baker, Oregon State, QB
- 1963—Roger Staubach, Navy, QB*
- 1964—Glenn Ressler, Penn State, C
- 1965—Tommy Nobis, Texas, LB
- 1966—Jim Lynch, Notre Dame, LB
- 1967—Gary Beban, UCLA, QB
- 1968—O.J. Simpson, Southern Cal, RB
- 1969—Mike Reid, Penn State, DT
- 1970—Jim Plunkett, Stanford, QB
- 1971—Ed Marinaro, Cornell, RB
- 1972—Brad Van Pelt, Michigan State, DB
- 1973—John Cappelletti, Penn State, RB
- 1974—Steve Joachim, Temple, QB
- 1975—Archie Griffin, Ohio State, RB
- 1976—Tony Dorsett, Pittsburgh, RB
- 1977—Ross Browner, Notre Dame, DE
- 1978—Chuck Fusina, Penn State, QB
- 1979—Charles White, Southern Cal, RB
- 1980—Hugh Green, Pittsburgh, DE
- 1981—Marcus Allen, Southern Cal, RB
- 1982—Herschel Walker, Georgia, RB*
- 1983—Mike Rozier, Nebraska, RB
- 1984—Doug Flutie, Boston College, QB
- 1985—Chuck Long, Iowa, QB
- 1986—Vinny Testaverde, Miami (Fla.), QB
- 1987—Don McPherson, Syracuse, QB
- 1988—Barry Sanders, Oklahoma State, RB*
- 1989—Anthony Thompson, Indiana, RB*
- 1990—Ty Detmer, Brigham Young, QB*
- 1991—Desmond Howard, Michigan, WR*
- 1992—Gino Torretta, Miami (Fla.), QB
- 1993—Charlie Ward, Florida State, QB
- 1994—Kerry Collins, Penn State, QB
- 1995—Eddie George, Ohio State, RB

OUTLAND TROPHY

(Top interior lineman/Football Writers Association of America)

Year—Player, College, Pos.

- 1946—George Connor, Notre Dame, T
- 1947—Joe Steffy, Army, G
- 1948—Bill Fischer, Notre Dame, G
- 1949—Ed Bagdon, Michigan State, G
- 1950—Bob Gain, Kentucky, T
- 1951—Jim Weatherall, Oklahoma, T
- 1952—Dick Modzelewski, Maryland, T
- 1953—J.D. Roberts, Oklahoma, G
- 1954—Bill Brooks, Arkansas, G
- 1955—Calvin Jones, Iowa, G
- 1956—Jim Parker, Ohio State, G
- 1957—Alex Karras, Iowa, T
- 1958—Zeke Smith, Auburn, G
- 1959—Mike McGee, Duke, T
- 1960—Tom Brown, Minnesota, G
- 1961—Merlin Olsen, Utah State, T
- 1962—Bobby Bell, Minnesota, T
- 1963—Scott Appleton, Texas, T
- 1964—Steve DeLong, Tennessee, T
- 1965—Tommy Nobis, Texas, G
- 1966—Lloyd Phillips, Arkansas, T
- 1967—Ron Yary, Southern Cal, T
- 1968—Bill Stanfill, Georgia, T
- 1969—Mike Reid, Penn State, DT
- 1970—Jim Stillwagon, Ohio State, MG
- 1971—Larry Jacobson, Nebraska, DT
- 1972—Rich Glover, Nebraska, MG
- 1973—John Hicks, Ohio State, OT
- 1974—Randy White, Maryland, DE
- 1975—Lee Roy Selmon, Oklahoma, DT
- 1976—Ross Browner, Notre Dame, DE*
- 1977—Brad Shearer, Texas, DT
- 1978—Greg Roberts, Oklahoma, G
- 1979—Jim Ritcher, North Carolina St., C
- 1980—Mark May, Pittsburgh, OT
- 1981—Dave Rimington, Nebraska, C*
- 1982—Dave Rimington, Nebraska, C
- 1983—Dean Steinkuhler, Nebraska, G
- 1984—Bruce Smith, Virginia Tech, DT
- 1985—Mike Ruth, Boston College, NG
- 1986—Jason Buck, Brigham Young, DT
- 1987—Chad Hennings, Air Force, DT
- 1988—Tracy Rucker, Auburn, DT

- 1989—Moe Elewonibi, Brigham Young, OG
- 1990—Russell Maryland, Miami, DT
- 1991—Steve Emtman, Washington, DT*
- 1992—Will Shields, Nebraska, OG
- 1993—Rob Waldrop, Arizona, NG
- 1994—Zach Wiegert, Nebraska, OT
- 1995—Jonathan Ogden, UCLA, OT

LOMBARDI AWARD

(Top lineman/Rotary Club of Houston)

Year—Player, College, Pos.

- 1970—Jim Stillwagon, Ohio State, MG
- 1971—Walt Patulski, Notre Dame, DE
- 1972—Rich Glover, Nebraska, MG
- 1973—John Hicks, Ohio State, OT
- 1974—Randy White, Maryland, DT
- 1975—Lee Roy Selmon, Oklahoma, DT
- 1976—Wilson Whitley, Houston, DT
- 1977—Ross Browner, Notre Dame, DE
- 1978—Bruce Clark, Penn State, DT
- 1979—Brad Budde, Southern Cal, G
- 1980—Hugh Green, Pittsburgh, DE
- 1981—Kenneth Sims, Texas, DT
- 1982—Dave Rimington, Nebraska, C
- 1983—Dean Steinkuhler, Nebraska, G
- 1984—Tony Degrate, Texas, DT
- 1985—Tony Casillas, Oklahoma, NG
- 1986—Cornelius Bennett, Alabama, LB
- 1987—Chris Spielman, Ohio State, LB
- 1988—Tracy Rucker, Auburn, DT
- 1989—Percy Snow, Michigan State, LB
- 1990—Chris Zorich, Notre Dame, DT
- 1991—Steve Emtman, Washington, DT*
- 1992—Marvin Jones, Florida State, LB*
- 1993—Aaron Taylor, Notre Dame, OT
- 1994—Warren Sapp, Miami (Fla.), DT*
- 1995—Orlando Pace, Ohio State, OT/d

DAVEY O'BRIEN AWARD

(Top quarterback/Davey O'Brien Educational and Charitable Trust of Fort Worth, Tex.)

Year—Player, College

- 1981—Jim McMahon, Brigham Young
- 1982—Todd Blackledge, Penn State
- 1983—Steve Young, Brigham Young
- 1984—Doug Flutie, Boston College
- 1985—Chuck Long, Iowa
- 1986—Vinny Testaverde, Miami (Fla.)
- 1987—Don McPherson, Syracuse
- 1988—Troy Aikman, UCLA
- 1989—Andre Ware, Houston*
- 1990—Ty Detmer, Brigham Young*
- 1991—Ty Detmer, Brigham Young
- 1992—Gino Torretta, Miami (Fla.)
- 1993—Charlie Ward, Florida State
- 1994—Kerry Collins, Penn State
- 1995—Danny Wuerffel, Florida*

BUTKUS AWARD

(Top linebacker/Downtown Athletic Club of Orlando)

Year—Player, College

- 1985—Brian Bosworth, Oklahoma*
- 1986—Brian Bosworth, Oklahoma
- 1987—Paul McGowan, Florida State
- 1988—Derrick Thomas, Alabama
- 1989—Percy Snow, Michigan State
- 1990—Alfred Williams, Colorado
- 1991—Erick Anderson, Michigan
- 1992—Marvin Jones, Florida State*
- 1993—Trev Alberts, Nebraska
- 1994—Dana Howard, Illinois
- 1995—Kevin Hardy, Illinois

DOAK WALKER AWARD

(Top junior or senior running back/GTE SMU Athletic Forum of Dallas)

Year—Player, College

- 1990—Greg Lewis, Washington
- 1991—Trevor Cobb, Rice*
- 1992—Garrison Hearst, Georgia*
- 1993—Byron (Bam) Morris, Texas Tech*
- 1994—Rashaan Salaam, Colorado*
- 1995—Eddie George, Ohio State

JIM THORPE AWARD

(Top defensive back/Jim Thorpe Athletic Club of Oklahoma City)

Year—Player, College

- 1986—Thomas Everett, Baylor
- 1987—Bennie Blades, Miami (Fla.)
- Rickey Dixon, Oklahoma*
- 1988—Deion Sanders, Florida State

- 1989—Mark Carrier, Southern Cal*
- 1990—Darryl Lewis, Arizona
- 1991—Terrell Buckley, Florida State*
- 1992—Deon Figures, Colorado
- 1993—Antonio Langham, Alabama
- 1994—Chris Hudson, Colorado
- 1995—Greg Myers, Colorado State

LOU GROZA AWARD

(Top kicker/Palm Beach, Fla., County Sports Commission)

Year—Player, College

- 1992—Joe Allison, Memphis State*
- 1993—Judd Davis, Florida*
- 1994—Steve McLaughlin, Arizona
- 1995—Michael Reeder, Texas Christian/d

FRED BILETNIKOFF AWARD

(Top receiver/College Football Writers Association of America)

Year—Player, College

- 1994—Bobby Engram, Penn State*
- 1995—Terry Glenn, Ohio State*

I-AA AWARD WINNERS

*Junior. All others seniors.

WALTER PAYTON AWARD

(Top I-AA player/The Sports Network)

Year—Player, College, Pos.

- 1987—Kenny Gamble, Colgate, RB
- 1988—Dave Meggett, Towson State, RB
- 1989—John Friesz, Idaho, QB
- 1990—Walter Dean, Grambling State, RB
- 1991—Jamie Martin, Weber State, QB*
- 1992—Michael Payton, Marshall, QB
- 1993—Doug Nussmeier, Idaho, QB
- 1994—Steve McNair, Alcorn State, QB
- 1995—Dave Dickenson, Montana, QB

EDDIE ROBINSON AWARD

(Top I-AA coach/The Sports Network)

Year—Coach, College

- 1987—Mark Duffner, Holy Cross
- 1988—Bill Russo, Lafayette
- 1989—Erk Russell, Georgia Southern
- 1990—Gene McDowell, Central Florida
- 1991—Chris Ault, Nevada
- 1992—Charlie Taaffe, The Citadel
- 1993—Dan Allen, Boston University
- 1994—Jim Tressel, Youngstown State
- 1995—Don Read, Montana

1995 BOWL RESULTS

ALAMO BOWL

Texas A&M 22, Michigan 20

ALOHA BOWL

Kansas 51, UCLA 30

CARQUEST BOWL

North Carolina 20, Arkansas 10

CITRUS BOWL

Tennessee 20, Ohio State 14

COPPER BOWL

Texas Tech 55, Air Force 41

COTTON BOWL

Colorado 38, Oregon 6

FIESTA BOWL

Nebraska 62, Florida 24

GATOR BOWL

Syracuse 41, Clemson 0

HOLIDAY BOWL

Kansas State 54, Colorado State 21

INDEPENDENCE BOWL

LSU 45, Michigan State 26

LAS VEGAS BOWL

Toledo 40, Nevada 37, OT

LIBERTY BOWL

East Carolina 19, Stanford 13

ORANGE BOWL

Florida State 31, Notre Dame 26

OUTBACK BOWL

Penn State 43, Auburn 14

PEACH BOWL

Virginia 34, Georgia 27

ROSE BOWL

USC 41, Northwestern 32

SUGAR BOWL

Virginia Tech 28, Texas 10

SUN BOWL

Iowa 38, Washington 18

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1995 FINAL POLLS

TSN	AP	USA TODAY/ CNN
1. Nebraska	1. Nebraska	1. Nebraska
2. Florida	2. Florida	2. Tennessee
3. Tennessee	3. Tennessee	3. Florida
4. Colorado	4. Florida St.	4. Colorado
5. Florida St.	5. Colorado	5. Florida St.
6. Kansas St.	6. Ohio St.	6. Kansas St.
7. Northwestern	7. Kansas St.	7. Northwestern
8. Ohio St.	8. Northwestern	8. Ohio St.
9. Virginia Tech	9. Kansas	9. Virginia Tech
10. Kansas	10. Virginia Tech	10. Kansas
11. Penn St.	11. Notre Dame	11. USC
12. Notre Dame	USC	12. Penn State
13. USC	13. Penn St.	Notre Dame
14. Texas	14. Texas	14. Texas
15. Texas A&M	15. Texas A&M	15. Texas A&M
16. Virginia	16. Virginia	16. Syracuse
17. Syracuse	17. Michigan	17. Virginia
18. Michigan	18. Oregon	18. Oregon
19. Oregon	19. Syracuse	19. Michigan
20. Auburn	20. Miami	20. Texas Tech
21. Miami	21. Alabama	21. Auburn
22. Alabama	22. Auburn	22. Iowa
23. Texas Tech	23. Texas Tech	23. East Carolina
24. Toledo	24. Toledo	24. Toledo
25. East Carolina	25. Iowa	25. Louisiana St.

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

ATH —athlete	int./game —interceptions per game	rec. —receptions
att. —attempts	JC —junior college	rec./game —receptions per game
avg. —average	Jr. —junior	RS —sat out 1995 as a redshirt
C —center	K —kicker	S —safety
CB —cornerback	KR —kick returner	SB —slotback
comp. —completions	L —lineman	SE —split end
DB —defensive back	LB —linebacker	Soph. —sophomore
DE —defensive end	NT —nose tackle	Sr. —senior
DL —defensive lineman	OL —offensive lineman	St. —State
DT —defensive tackle	OLB —outside linebacker	T —tackle
E —end	OT —offensive tackle	TB —tailback
FB —fullback	P —punter	TDs —touchdowns
FG/game —field goals per game	PATs —points after TD	TE —tight end
FGs —field goals	Prop 48 —failed to meet requirements of Proposition 48 last year	WB —wingback
FL —flanker	pts. —points	WR —wide receiver
Fr. —freshman	pts./game —points per game	yds. —yards
G —guard	QB —quarterback	yds./game —yards per game
HB —halfback	RB —running back	
IB —I-back		
ILB —inside linebacker		
int. —interceptions		

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SPORTS CORNER

Catching up with...Jack Mildren

In Oklahoma football lore, the '71 Nebraska game remains a classic—and Mildren's Sooners lost

By BOB COLON

Some called it the "Game of the Decade." Others thought in loftier terms, labeling it the "Game of the Century." This was long before either billing became commonplace.

It was No. 1 Nebraska vs. No. 2 Oklahoma, Thanksgiving Day 1971, in Norman, Okla. And it lived up to the hype.

Nebraska was 10-0, defending national champion in one poll and unbeaten in 29 games. Bob Devaney's crunching defense was allowing 6.4 points per game. Chuck Fairbanks' 9-0 Sooners were averaging 45 points, and their slick wishbone offense was amassing 563 yards per outing.

Jack Mildren, Oklahoma's quarterback that day, says people still ask him about the titanic clash and that he and Jerry Tagge, his Nebraska counterpart, have become close friends.

"Tagge and I do interviews right before OU-Nebraska games," says Mildren, 46, an Oklahoma City resident and president of Pre-Paid Legal Services, sort of a legal HMO. "We have also done interviews when No. 1 and No. 2 teams meet."

Mildren had a memorable day against the Huskers. He scored two touchdowns and fired two touchdown passes to Jon Harrison. Mildren rushed for 130 yards and passed for 137 as Oklahoma—despite three lost fumbles—outgained Nebraska, 467 yards to 362.

"I'm surprised people are still talking 25 years later about a game played by 18-, 19- and 20-year-olds," Mildren says. "The game was everything college football can be, played between student/athletes and not athlete/students. Both teams came from behind twice. There was one penalty and nearly 900 yards of offense."

"Oklahoma played as well as it could; you can't ask anymore. We put them behind at the half (the Sooners seized the lead, 17-14, on Mildren's first scoring pass). I felt we were in control."

The Sooners weren't. With Jeff Kinney scoring two short-yardage touchdowns in the third quarter and Nebraska's defense thwarting Greg Pruitt (a 1,665-yard rusher that season), the Cornhuskers took a 28-17 lead. Mildren rallied his troops once more, though. He made his second touchdown run in the final half-minute of the period, then connected with Harrison midway through the fourth quarter on a 16-yard strike that put Oklahoma ahead, 31-28.

Nebraska answered with a crushing 74-yard drive, consuming 5½ minutes, with Kinney's fourth touchdown of the day sending the Huskers back in front, 35-31. It would end that way, with Mildren and Co. unable to threaten in the final 1:38.

Mildren rejects the notion that the Cornhuskers' containment of Pruitt, who managed 53 yards, was pivotal. "That's sim-



Sports or politics, Jack Mildren (left, with his Oklahoma coach, Chuck Fairbanks, and, right, as a candidate) reveled in many victories and showed class in rare defeats. And his competitive fire is still burning.

ply the way they chose to play things," he says. "We (adjusted and) ... got 31 points and 470 total yards against that defense. Not a bad day."

Nor does he bemoan Husker star Johnny Rodgers' 72-yard punt return that accounted for the game's first points. "We thought there was a clip, but it wasn't called. That's the way it is." He does agonize over the Sooners' momentum-killing fumbles (one of them his own).

Still, "I have pleasant memories about the game," Mildren says. "People in Oklahoma have a nice feeling. You think about things you could have done better. It's amazing that in OU lore we talk about this game so much—and we lost."

The Huskers repeated as national champions. In the final '71 AP poll, Big Eight Conference teams ranked 1-2-3, with Oklahoma second and Colorado third.

Mildren then played three years in the NFL, mostly as a defensive back, with the Colts and Patriots. With a degree in petroleum land management, he went on to head an oil and gas company and remained in the petroleum business until gravitating to politics in 1990.

"It (politics) was not something I dreamed about as a teenager, nothing I dreamed about at all," Mildren says. "Like so many citizens, I was frustrated with the way things were going economically and socially. ... Rather than just complain, I got involved in politics. By and large, it has been a wonderful experience."

Mildren made the quantum leap from political novice to candidate for lieutenant

governor of Oklahoma. And, reminiscent of his athletic days, he won.

"I had to fight the 'jock stereotype'—J.C. Watts can tell you about that," says Mildren, alluding to a fellow Sooners quarterback who won a Congressional seat in 1994. "It was fun, though. Wonderful. I had the support of my family and friends. Oklahoma's best asset is its people. Interacting with the press early (as an athlete) was a real benefit."

Mildren served four years ("I thought we made a difference"), then won the Democratic gubernatorial nomination in '94. In the general election, he finished second in a three-way race.

"Losing was distasteful," he says, "but the fire is not out. We're keeping our options open. I enjoyed the political arena. I'm not putting that in the past tense, either. We haven't ruled out anything."

After the bump in his political road, Mildren turned to developing and marketing legal-service plans. Whatever his field of endeavor, though, he still is connected to sports. Son Drew was a sophomore backup quarterback at Oklahoma City's Casady High School in '95, and the Oklahoma program is never far from his thoughts.

Mildren supports the Sooners' hiring of John Blake as coach. "Blake is a wonderful choice," Mildren says. "The excitement has come back to OU football."

Maybe so, but it may never equal what occurred (in a losing cause, no less) on November 25, 1971.

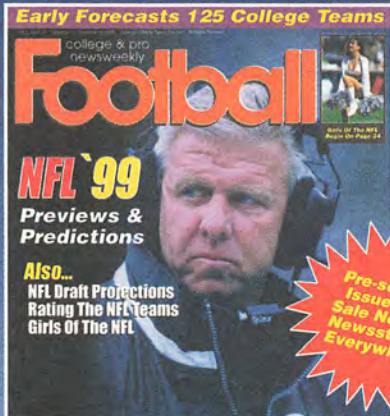
Bob Colon is sports editor of the *Daily Oklahoman* in Oklahoma City.

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